"Where there is no vision the people perish"

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IMAGINATION AND THE BACK-CLOTH

IMAGINATION is surely the poet's most precious gift. It is the tool, par excellence, of his trade, the one with a jewel in the handle.

At the back of the mind as a kind of back-cloth for the play of imagination, or the work of it, hangs always that deep dark curtain of memory, thick and rich as night itself. So deep, so dark, living but unconscious, perhaps asleep.

Comes the needle-point of the imagination limning a pattern clear or coloured, aimless or exact, ethereal or as concrete as a flower on the floor of Botticelli's Primavera, or an illuminated capital in an ancient missal, and we fling up our arms and grasp in loose fingers, light, colour, sight, sound, the tiny solid bodies of birds ; feel, without touching, the twisted sun-dried leaves of trees in summer, or the limp and sappy ones of spring ; plunge our hands deep into the hot earth steaming after rain—the stuff sticks in our very finger nails. Bird-clatter spangles the back-cloth with stars and stripes ; it is an Arabian Night's entertainment, but effortless, for we are outside the realm of clear thought and reason. Light as a butterfly this inebriated imagination, and often it dreams in the same apparent sleep or wakes and flutters.

If we can imagine nothing of which we have never before had any kind of first or second-hand experience, then imagination must imply a choice among memories more or less conscious. A flickering over the dark curtain, we leap, we fly, or slide back through the centuries perhaps, a distinct movement here—we lift the dark curtain and penetrate beyond it, we poise, we skim. Sometimes we long to leave it all and down tools, if we could.

Imagination appears to move to a greater or lesser degree to the same rhythm as its motivator. More noticeably perhaps in cases where the latter is recognised, though the opposite theory seems rather more likely. For instance, I think perhaps of my income tax, and at the same time watch the writhings of a tree in a wind. The thought of my income tax may prevail with a nasty persistency, but the violent rhythm of the tree's movement will probably take a strong hold on my imagination.

Mr. O. St. John Gogarty, in the following lovely lines :

> And up the back garden
> The sound comes to me
> Of the lapsing unsoilable
> Whispering sea.

brings about in the imagination a solemn swinging and swaying, till there is nothing but a great movement from side to side in the mind. There is barely room even for a pattern on the back-cloth. It is almost as if the imagination could be completely filled so long as the object it worked upon, or that worked upon it, were materially great enough.

In Mr. Plomer's clever portrait-poem "The Levantine," one's imaginative response is to stand still, gazing enthralled in an ageless, sunny contemplation, while memories of ancient and historically interesting races of mankind wander nomad-like across the back-cloth.

A recent little poem by James Kirkup comes to my mind in this connection ; I found it satisfying for several reasons. In the last verse—it is about black-skulled sheep :

> into white-spined articulate roads
> or on hill sides with chugging grouse
> collect dubiously, cough like men,
> shudder, hiding their bright red sores.

I believe that one could not, if one tried, appreciate the picture and at the same time prevent the imagination from setting up a choppy, jerky movement in the mind. The back-cloth benefits by his painstaking photography and a great stretch of wind-swept brown-green grass is thrown upon it.

Forsaking the effect of rhythm let us consider the play of colour on the imagination. Not the obvious ones, the bright green grass or the red scarf round a girl's head matching her lips, but the subtler suggestions conveyed by a poem such as Matthew Arnold's "Forsaken Merman." Here, the imagination is curiously inglobed in all the iridiscent colours of the opal, not temporarily, but in a quite certain way which returns with every memory of the poem. Of course the individual impression *is* individual but there appears to be a sufficient similarity in results to make them interesting and noteworthy. The silt of old poems resting in the memory is a constant source of joy to the poetic mind.

There is the "Book of Thel" (the imagination mercifully is not concerned with order). What other poem, ancient or modern, has so perfectly imprisoned the very qualities of light and of water as this one ? It may be years since the last glance at it, but the impression of watery clearness, especially in the first pages, is persistent. Technique of course ; but we are speaking of the effect of such things on the imagination, and the question of technique itself is outside the province of this article.

The appeal of texture too is fascinating. Marvell's "Nymph complaining for the Death of her Fawn" is a first-rate example. A group of statuary, almost, not quite alive, is thrown against the back-cloth, everlastingly clear-cut, creamy and opaque. This statuary is not of stone but of the fleshy texture of magnolia blooms.

Again, pastoral poetry—by genius out of artificiality—provides a picture that never fades. Pretty porcelain ladies, singing, sighing swains, and all the paraphernalia of tinkling streams, oaten pipes—the thin notes drift down to us—and all the other toys, are accepted by the imagination

as a lasting gift.

On the other hand, and referring to the shock-tactics type of poetry, presuming the technique of the poem to be sufficiently successful, the imagination will allow itself to suffer darkness, to reel, to quiver and be temporarily overcome; yet in the long run it re-asserts its own vitality, and to the extent of the truth that is in it will select for final assimilation only that which is inherently sound and therefore lasting in the work.

The design on the dark curtain is no haphazard affair. It is the indelible result of the findings of the work of the imagination. Lesser impressions disappear with time. More important ones remain and seem in a sense to solidify. A study of comparative imaginations should be amusing and possibly illuminating.

D. J. Cutts.

STRANGE IS THE WISDOM WHERE THE WATERS END

STRANGE is the wisdom where the waters end
And endings are the sweet and sorrowful,
Cast all your fountain dead and strain away
Wine from the wounded casket.
All our day runs and is wistful,
Our day whom time renounced along
With many waitings and our days full dead.

So from the morning take the wind and song,
Take all my wounds away, take my frail love,
Where, from the echoing heart, the life has fled,
Faltered and fallen and the song away.

We were the futile, we the young with power
Counting our many pleasures for the instant wrong,
And for our folly, O glorious of youth,
We pay our bitter penny and are dumb
Like children robbed of summer's song
And robbed, O bitterness of youth, of love.

Strange is the wisdom where the waters end
But water runs to stream and stream to sea,
And sea, dark as the mystery of death,
Sinks down to ocean where our ships are lost
On some horizon of our wishful end.

Strange is the wisdom where the waters end.

Emanuel Litvinoff.

IN THE FOG

I WISH it could be remembered
That in the fog of this war,
In the worst time to be living,
Though that has been thought before,

A man and a woman,
Being young and in moderate health,
And neither engrossed in real poverty
Nor insulated by wealth,

Were simply and wholly happy,
Not often, but at times,
Escaping the smell of evil,
The boredom, the lies, the crimes.

For the shame of the hating and terror,
The newspapers' filth and the air's,
Corrupted the West by millions,
And was equally theirs.

But life exists in its units,
And what is once real for one
Is an absolute real, however
Private and quickly undone.

And these for a week together
Would be frankly and seriously gay,
Happy to strike, each morning,
Like striking matches, a day;

And chiefly to have the fortune
To come to the house with the five
Windows facing eternity,
Happy to be alive;

Happy to live together,
To ride a wild surf and then sink
In the surf, to feel and then not feel,
Happy even to think,

Yes, even to think about living,
To see the shrinking of good
To something small as a match-stick,
With evil big as a wood.

I would like it to be remembered;
For one day the fog will deceive,
And when the unborn look back at us
It will be hard to believe.

LAURENCE WHISTLER.

EPIGRAMS BY G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

CRITIC-ARTIST

He dips his pen in acid when he writes ;
He etches, and in vain the acid bites :
He mocks, all vinegar, his fellows' toil ;
He paints, in what self-mockery of oil !

PAPER SHORTAGE

(*Pornography is said to be on the increase*)

Be comforted. Though War forbid to print
  Classics for Everyman in khaki shirt,
Books shall not perish—Messrs. Leer and Squint,
  Pornographers, find paper cheap as dirt.

NEW YEAR

Content, the lower mammals kill their prey
A cruel—doubtless—but old-fashioned way.
Men, each new year, refinements new invent ;
The sons of Progress never are content.

TO THE GREAT TIT

Titmouse—the Great—wings half a foot in span,
How few among the solemn race of man,
A Frederick or Alexander, dare
With all your merry tribe that title share !

EPITAPH

(*A variation on Shelley*)

Two friends : as they in life were one,
So be their fame, now they are gone :
Nor let their bodies lie apart
That living held a single heart.

SHOT AT DAWN

These watchers, whose prophetic sight
  No darkness could withhold
From seeing and from hailing light,
  Were shot at dawn, blindfold.

ON ENEMY DEAD

buried with military honours

Enough. Here is an end of hate.
  In blind obedience they spilt
Heroic blood, to expiate
  Their own, if not their country's, guilt.

G. Rostrevor Hamilton.

A DAY IN DECEMBER

THE haze upon the meadow
Denies the death of a year,
For the sun's within it, something bridal
Is more than dreaming here.
There is no end, no severance,
No moment of deliverance,
No quietus made,
Though quiet abounds and deliverance moves
In that sunny shade.

What is winter ? a word,
A figure, a clever guess.
That time-word does not utter at all
This drowsy wakefulness.
The secret stream scorns interval,
Though the calendar shouts one from the wall—
The spirit works always ;
And death is no more dead than this
Flower-haunted haze.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

PROUD VIRTUE

SOME say thou art more radiant than the Sun
That rides, triumphant, like a god at noon ;
Others that thou art purer than the Moon
Reigning in Heaven when the day is done.
So all men join in praising thee. But I,
Who loved thee more than all the world beside
And learned thy vanity and pride
Know thee more distant than the palest star
That coldly shines, enthroned afar
In the Winter sky.

Do men account thee steadfast ? Look above
Where fixed stars perish in their constancy.
Would'st thou be pure ? Warm thou thy chastity
At God's own altar with the fire of Love.
So shall thy virtue be a glorious light
Caught from high Heaven, not a dying flame
Kindled below by Man's acclaim,
And when thy pale star sets and thou art gone
Thy quenchless spirit shall burn on
Illumining the night.

C. W. COCKERELL.

TOULON

(November 27th, 1942)

BRAVE men and gallant ships here made their choice—
To die for nothing, and to save mankind.
Here, in their wreckage, history shall find
Only the enemies of freedom broken.
When France speaks French the ages hear her voice:
Now in majestic silence she has spoken.

CHARLES MORGAN.

THE BARRIERS

BETWEEN the muscle and the hammer-head,
The liquor and the veinous leaf it feeds;
Between the vision and the throne of God,
The promise and the still-born shrouded words;

Between the hope that flies, the fear that dives,
The beak of hawk, the pretty breast of wren;
Between the husk that dries, the seed that thrives,
The fire that flames, and that which leaves the pen;

Stand blood, its channel and the broken cross,
The bed unslept-in and the worn-down shoe,
The fruit of pity and the breath of Christ,
And all the bones kissed clean beneath the sea.

And would you say it, even if you could,
Smash cage and let the weary words fly free?
Might that not let the tigers from the wood,
And madness ride across the morning sky?

HENRY TREECE.

ONE DAY

ONE day
Born bright and blue from out an age of cloud,
And pouring sudden gold from wells of rain,
That's held and used and loved
The more we know it will not come again.
We lie and watch the woods that lean
Down slopes of light,
We see wide fields of running corn
And spaces tawny in the sun

Crimson streaked with sorrel and rosebay,
And far away
The sea
Through fringe of grasses feather fine.
Hills that were humble once and dun
Spread wine-spilled in a flush of heather,
Black patched
By huge cloud shadows following the sun,
The sun
That wraps us two in one deep, sweet content.
A swallow spins from out the firmament
And skims our harbouring grasses with her breast,
A butterfly
With purposeless unrest
And no direction zig-zags by,
No flower can satisfy him long—
A pauper heart borne by enamelled wings—
He feels not the desire
For life,
One day is all he asks.
One day!
We cannot put the hours back
Nor stop the sun
That climbs high heaven in a fever haste,
Nor stay the shades
That gather under every tree
And inch by inch creep further through the grass—
That we could hold the stars
Shaken through depth of night
In some high pass
Of Time
And keep this moment ever new and bright,
That we could climb
Where the swift streams run not dry,
Where moons might change
But never you and I.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

THREE POEMS BY CAPT. R. VAN DEN BERGH

ARMY HUTS

SLEEPING in these wooden hutments,
Nearly every night I hear
Eerie creakings which awake me,
Quiet whisperings, and they make me
Watch for a phantom to appear ;
And wonder if the huts can boast
A new or legendary ghost.

And if a ghost, what shall it be ?
The spirit of a lovely maid
Who was courted, loved, and taken,
Then too easily forsaken
By soldier gone to ply his trade ;
So now she goes from room to room
Seeking another man with whom . . . . .

Maybe it's a warrior ghost,
The spirit of a soldier slain,
Who comes to find a comrade where
Their soldier life they used to share
And hopes to share with him again ;
You walk in vain from bed to bed,
Your comrade, too, is lying dead.

MOUNTED PATROL

ON night patrol : not of the kind
That twists the nerves and makes
The heart-beat quicker, while the mind
Turns hillocks into tanks and takes
A bush for troops concealed.
We are riding from beam to beam
Of moonlight playing on olive trees,
Causing our Arab greys to seem
Ghost-like and diaphanous ; one sees
Rare beauty moon-revealed.
This alluring landscape joys
Our hearts and seemingly intensifies
The sympathy of horse with man ; the noise
Of the curb-chain alone defies
The stillness of the scene.

Ride on! whilst this bewitching beauty,
(Take a bearing from a star)
Enchanting the patrol on duty,
Veils the bitter knowledge that they are
Part of a war machine.

TO SHARE YOUR LAUGHTER

I LONG to share with you again the daily round,
Enjoy those silly nothings wherein we see
Humour peculiarly ours, where we have found
A mutual joy in triviality.

I long to see your quickly changing moods appear,
Your heights of joy and depth of desperation,
To linger over meals with you for hours, and hear
Your effervescent style of conversation.

Even to know again your anger, would be sweet,
The swift remorse that always follows after;
Each of these is in the measure of my conceit,
But most I long to share again your laughter.

Capt., Transjordan Frontier Force. R. VAN DEN BERGH.

THE WELCOME AT THE GATE

An old Jew, in Poland, was ordered to break a stone head of Christ with a hammer. He hesitated, and a German soldier swore at him, saying he would shew him how to smash heads. With the butt-end of a rifle, he then smashed the Jew's own head in.—(From "The German New Order in Poland.")

I THINK the Master met him at the Gate,
And, laying His Hand upon that wounded head,
I think He said:
"Come in, my brother. You have found Me late;
Thus long I waited, knowing you would come,
At even, home.

"From terror and from tribulation? Yea,
I bore them too, the scourge, the felon's way,
The mortal pain.
No worshipper of Christ, yet loth to break
Mine image, you have suffered for My sake.
Arise, and reign!"

MARGARET ORMISTON.

THE DECLINE OF THE GRAND MANNER

RECENTLY I attended a literary gathering at which an attack was made on a certain well-known poet of a generation ago.

"This writer," stated the critic, a lady who spoke with the finality of one who not only knows but is sure that she knows, "belongs to an epoch as remote from us as the stage-coach or the spinning-wheel. We of to-day, unless we lend a nostalgic ear to ancient echoes, cannot listen seriously to his hollow magnificences, his sonorous rhythms celebrating Victorianisms such as love, truth and beauty. We see only bombast where our fathers and mothers thought they saw splendour. For this poet wrote in the *grand manner*. Like Tennyson, Dowson and others of his ilk, he went strutting flamboyantly through a world which, fortunately! we have outlived."

Leaving the meeting, I reflected upon the speaker's words. What is this deadly *grand manner* which we superior beings, who live in the favoured Nineteen Forties, have been privileged to surmount? Why is it that we "see only bombast where our fathers and mothers thought they saw splendour"? Is it that the nature of the world, and of poetry, has changed utterly? Is it that we are so infinitely wiser than preceding generations, so much more percipient? Now I for one am willing to concede that the road to a brighter future is over the tombstones of old errors, and that the human race might as well be ossified forthwith if yesterday's mistakes are not to be rectified to-day or to-morrow. Nevertheless, I was not convinced that the *grand manner* and the dinosaur were quite contemporaneous; nor even that all the forms of expression listed under that vague title deserved a sentence of decapitation. Were the older poets bombastic? Undoubtedly—on occasion. Did they resort to grandiloquence when a blushing simplicity would have been more in place? Undoubtedly—but again only on occasion. Bombast and grandiloquence, it seemed to me, were faults of the human race whenever the desire to impress outraced the power to express; and were not confined to any literary school or medium. Pursuing this line of inquiry, I examined again some of the work of the rebels against the *grand manner*, along with some of the most contemned examples of that outmoded style; and arrived at conclusions that struck me as curious, and possibly not without significance.

Let me offer some illustrations. Here, to begin with, is a well-known stanza from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage":

> There was a sound of revelry by night,
> And Belgium's capital had gathered then
> Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
> The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
> A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
> Music arose with its voluptuous swell,

Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell:
But hush! hark! a deep sounds strikes like a rising knell!

Is this in the *grand manner*? If not, I do not know how that manner is to be defined. Not only in the formal Spenserian stanza, but in the sonorous expression and the pomp and pageantry of the thought, this is the epitome of everything our lady critic was railing against. Therefore, in contrast, let us turn to the following, by Marianne Moore, a conspicuous rebel against the style in question:

There is a certain amount of poetry in unconscious
fastidiousness. Certain Ming
products, imperial floor covering of coach
wheel yellow, are well enough in their way but I have
seen something
that I like better—a
mere childish attempt to make an imperfectly
ballasted animal stand up,
similar determination to make a pup
eat his meal on a plate.

No one would accuse this of erring on the side of the over-august. It does not regale us with lordly abstraction like "beauty" and "chivalry," nor does it descend to banalities such as "fair women" and "brave men." Hearts do not beat happily, nor do eyes look love in verse of this type. Yet can any reader of the two passages doubt which is the more bombastic, the more affected, the more rococo and unreal?

Or take this passage from "Human Cylinders," by Mina Loy:

Simplifications of man
In the evervating dusk
Your indistinctness
Serves me the core of the kernel of you
When in the frenzied reaching-out of intellect to intellect
Leaning brow to brow communicative
Over the abyss of the potential
Concordance of respiration
Shames
Absence of corresponding between the verbal sensory
And reciprocity
Of conception
And expression . . .

Certainly, this is not in the *grand manner*! And, just as certainly, the following lines from "Prometheus Unbound" are embodied in that detested medium:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates

From its own wreck the things it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

This passage is guilty of a score of infringements, according to the modern code: the use of abstractions such as "Hope" and "Power"; the didacticism; the rhetorical style. Yet which of the two last quoted excerpts, may I ask, is actually the simpler, the more natural, the more direct in its communication, the more understandable and impressive?

But it may be argued, and not without reason, that I have quoted examples of modern work tending toward extremes—even though, it will be admitted, they are less extreme than the output of E. E. Cummings and others. In any case, let us take a less radical illustration. Consider the following blank verse passage by Archibald MacLeish:

Night after night I lie like this listening.
Night after night I cannot sleep. I wake
Knowing something, thinking something has happened.
I have this feeling a great deal. I have
Sadness often. At night I have this feeling.
Waking I feel this pain as though I knew
Something not to be thought of, something unbearable.
I feel this pain at night as though some
Terrible thing had happened . . . .

One's instant reaction is, why didn't he see a doctor? Nevertheless, this is not affected nor freakish in the manner of Marianne Moore and Mina Loy, though it has, to my mind, an affectation of a sort, the affectation of a deliberate naïvety, an over-simplification, bringing one consciously down to an elementary mental level. This is not only unnatural, it is, from a creative point of view, even worse; it is unpoetic. Compared with this, the following lines by Thomas Hood, though in the *grand manner*, impress me as eminently unbombastic, direct and normal:

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight,
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprite
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below . . .

Possibly a justified exception could be taken to the phrase "immortal sprite." But this does not alter the fact that the passage fulfills its purpose in arousing a particular thought and mood. And this brings me to what I consider in some ways the most vital point of all: that the

pompous and the bombastic are not absolutes; that they are only relative to the subject under consideration. The word "magnificent," while it may be appropriate with reference to the sunset, would certainly be bombastic if applied to the rose-tint of a baby's skin. The word "stupendous," while erring only on the side of under-expression when denoting the sidereal universe, may be merely bathetic if used to describe a house party. For the fact is that small, unemotional and petty phenomena require but small, unemotional and petty phrases to represent them properly; whereas events and spectacles of splendour can be depicted properly only in splendid language. Hence, I should say, the *grand manner* is not only justified when the subject-matter is grand; it is indispensable. Any other style, when used to delineate the awesome, the appalling, the sublime, the infinite or the eternal, must fail of its purpose even if it does not give an effect of grotesqueness and incongruity, or (as so often) of an unintended humour.

But it will be answered that the subject-matter of most modern poetry is not grand; quite the contrary, it is deliberately commonplace. And this I must concede—and must add that this fact goes to the very essence of the matter. For we have been pre-occupied with themes that do not require grandeur or eloquence of utterance; our Muse has come down to the level of dingy backyards, sordid restaurants, dock rats, and dollars; to the level of "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls," and:

> the hole
> in the wall where the W.C.T.U.
> sits knitting elastic stockings
> for varicose veins

and:

> Pig Cupid—his rosy snout
> Rooting erotic garbage

Just imagine trying to treat such themes in the language of *Paradise Lost*!

The fact that our poets descend to such pedestrian depths—and to such depths of irreverence—is in reality a reflection of the state of the age; an age that revolts not only at sublimities of expression, but at sublimities of thought; an age of distrust and denial, of cynicism and sourness, of wry curling lips that sneer, and of niggard spirits nibbling at dry crusts. The trouble actually is that we object less to grandeur of utterance than to what such grandeur represents; that our poets no longer like to speak of a "soul," for example, because they no longer believe in a soul; that they would prohibit references to "truth" and "beauty" because, far from accepting the glorious faith of John Keats, they are persuaded that both beauty and truth are fables. In the same way, they do not aspire to what a former age would have regarded as

"nobility" of sentiment, since they are persuaded that there is no nobility either in nature or in man ; they can see only the mote in the eye, the dust between them and the sunset, the mire at the rose's root ; and so they write only of the mote, the dust and the mire.

With all this I do not propose to quarrel ; let a man express himself on the plane of his own vision ; it is not my purpose to grind spectacles for the astigmatic. But with this I do definitely quarrel : that our earth-bound moderns not only are content to nuzzle face downward, but feel obliged to call upon others to imitate their burrowing. Thus, if some of our poets are not interested in themes such as "A Folded Skyscraper" and "Rear Porches of an Apartment Building" ; if they insist on seeing reality and meaning in objects above their own necks ; if they are not convinced that truth is obsolete, nor love and justice dead letters ; if they can perceive beauty in the ocean and the stars, the woods and the hills, and fail to take a blazé attitude toward the spring-time and the dawn ; and if, as a crowning insult, they celebrate these subjects with the stateliness of rhythm and phraseology appropriate to the themes—then they can be certain that the thunders of critical denunciation will boom out against them.

But let me not be misunderstood. I do not contend that the *grand manner* is the only one proper for poetry. It never has been so, and never will be ; there will always be themes requiring other treatment. I see nothing of this style in Burns' "To a Mountain Daisy" nor "To a Mouse," nor in a song such as his "Jean" :

> Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
> I dearly like the west,
> For there the bonnie lassie lives,
> The lassie I lo'e best :
> There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
> And monie a hill between ;
> By day and night my fancy's flight
> Is ever wi' my Jean.

Nor do I observe the *grand manner* in many of Wordsworth's poems, such as the famous Lucy lyrics, and "The Fountain" :

> We talked with open heart, and tongue
> Affectionate and true,
> A pair of friends, though I was young
> And Matthew seventy-two.
>
> We lay beneath a spreading oak,
> Beside a mossy seat ;
> And from the turf a fountain broke,
> And gurgled at our feet . . . .

Certainly, nothing could be simpler, more unassuming, and further from any attempt at magnificence. Yet when Wordsworth's subject-

matter required the *grand manner,* he could rise to this demand as superbly as any poet since Shakespeare :

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things . . . .

It is precisely this "joy of elevated thoughts," this "sense sublime" that requires eloquence of language for its proper presentation, and consequently calls for the *grand manner.* Modern poets and critics do not feel a joy nor a "sense sublime" at anything whatever ; consequently, they turn their backs on all who give indication of such a feeling. And, in so doing, they not only prove that they wear spiritual blinders, but eschew that fountain of inspiration which has provided the chief glory and illumination of English poetry throughout the centuries.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

[Our distinguished contributor may be regarded as the doyen of American critics. He has been a book reviewer on the *New York Times, Sun, Herald, The Internat. Book Review, Bookman,* etc. ; he was the winner of the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Peace Poem Contest in 1918, and THE POETRY REVIEW's Star Poem Contest, 1924 ; he has published several vols. of verse and criticism and essays, and has edited several anthologies, including *Modern American Lyrics* and *Modern British Lyrics.*]

SPEECH AND POETRY IN SCHOOLS

In the House of Lords, January 19th, 1943, Lord Brabazon called attention to the importance of phonetics in connection with democratic education, and moved for papers.

After debate, the Lord Chancellor, in reply, said that Lord Brabazon had emphasized the importance of securing in ous schools the abolition of slip-shod, mumbling, poor forms of speech. He (the Lord Chancellor) thought that a vast amount was added to the value and effectiveness of human conversation if certain varieties in speech, which had been derived from the area from which people came, could be preserved. The school must be in warm sympathy with family and local life and must never dream of despising or denouncing local habits, manners, and modes of speech. If it reproved the native mode of speech of the child it would only drive the child into silence. The school must use its influence to discourage mere mumbling, slovenly and downtrodden language, but must respect the traditions of the part of the country from which the child came and should help to equip the child with something that could be used as national currency. Children should be encouraged in the English tongue by reading aloud, by learning poetry, and by everything that tended to raise the level and purity of our language.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

WAR SONGS

[Our American Editor has sent us the following specially written contribution by Zo Elliott, composer of the war-famous song, "The Long, Long Trail, which, it will be recalled, was sung all through the last war by all the Allies and has since been sung as being an immortal composition.]

PASSING St. Thomas' Church, with my cousin—Private Smith, age twenty—one day last week, I saw members of the Seventh Regiment leaving the Church, and—as I feared—from a Memorial Service.

I didn't want the kid to be weighed down with the appearances of unhappiness on his furlough, but I did want him to follow the attending band along with me. Came "Tipperary," "Home Fires," "Over There," came my fear they wouldn't play it. Came Park Avenue and they did play "There's a Long, Long Trail."

"Uncle Zo, there's your song."

"Freeman," I said, "this was all on purpose but I wasn't sure it was going to work out." It did though—and set me thinking.

Why do not people write about the things they ought to write about when they try to write war songs ? Has the Totalitarian spirit affected Democracy so much that Democracy doesn't dare ?

Anglo-Saxon songs of national importance have seldom spoken of the glory of government or of the army. They have more often spoken of *Home,* as an instance, "The Girl I Left Behind Me." When I say this as a composer, I say it because of the direction which words bestow.

People who could write something true and simple, when they attempt to be patriotic, become involved and complicated in the general : this is no good.

Art at its best is personal and specific. If a specific piece of work is good enough it will become general, and if general, it may become national. This writer is not speaking of musical comedy songs : for instance, Irving Berlin's "I Left My Heart at the Canteen Door" or "There'll be Blue Birds over the White Cliffs of Dover," which are internationally popular, but because of their tempo are not marching songs or songs for mass formation.

The song "Der Fuehrer's Face," unlike "Mademoiselle of Armentieres," at its beginning started off so vulgarly that it was limited to certain gatherings before it had any importance nationally, however much the soldiers might enjoy its ribaldry. "Annie Laurie" was a very definite lady in relation to a very specific man. This very specific relation between the two became a very specific poem and song, ultimately used by British troops in the Crimean War.

People in general, if they have any sense, and I speak of Rupert Brooke, who said only dull people speak generalities, want the specific. They do not want vague philosophies and generalities. If Anglo-Saxons

want to be patriotic let them forget magnanimous statements of policy and return to Anglo-Saxon places and their lady loves.

Ask any American Marine the question, "Are you fighting for Humanity ?" He returns "What do you mean Humanity ?" He may be taught to magpie something else but in his heart of hearts the first answer is right. He's fighting for the folks at home—his home—and that means his own country.

That Marine is fighting for eternal values, not for varying political concepts. He's fighting as animals do . . . as primitive man has done . . . or a civilized man should do, to protect his own from slavery and from the domination by someone else. The rest is "the bunk" to him. It is enough to write of England if you are English. It is enough to write of America if you are American. Specifically defined, an English quality or place or an American one—if it is good—will ultimately become general. If said in music or poetry it will be a song for all the world and all time.

Returning to the specific idea, let us take Rupert Brooke's national sonnet "The Soldier" :

> If I should die, think only this of me :
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is forever England.

It is all very specifically boiled down to the personal. It is *I* to begin with, think only this of *Me*, and not a great space but just a little corner, that is forever, and then pointing to the general at last—England, but only England in relation to the specific person who is talking about himself. Also take Alan Seegers'

> I have a rendezvous with Death
> At some disputed barricade

Again it is *I*, the rendez is *His* rendezvous, the death his. Later this poem could apply to anyone.

I will speak of my song now :

> There's a long, long trail a winding
> Into the land of my dreams ;
> Where the nightingales are singing
> And the white moon beams.
> There's a long night of waiting until my dreams all come true
> 'Til the day that I'll be going
> Down that long, long trail with you.

In the beginning the trail was *mine,* I said *my* dreams and I said *you.* I wish I could write another but I won't do it by imitating something already done. However, I'll look for the specific.

Zo Elliott.

[Since writing this article Mr. Elliott has heard "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," which more or less proves his contention. The song was written about

a specific incident at Pearl Harbour, when the Chaplain, Captain McQuire, on taking his post is said to have given utterance to these words. The music traces its style to the Negro spiritual type of music which is specifically American type of music. In this style was written the famous "John Brown's Body" song of Civil War days, which ultimately became the basis of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." American writers can do no better than follow this type of music, rather than the more suave, cosmopolitan, metropolitan, and rather intricate cabaret music of our large cities ; for there is something indigenous and truly deep in this form of music, and best of all, specifically American—and Anglo-Saxon.]

MOTHERLAND

WHY does she call us from our exiled ease,
Our cloudy land with her inclement skies,
Until her wandering sons have haunted eyes
That no palm-filtered sunlight can appease,
Nor high crisp snows, nor eucalyptus trees ?
Why does she call us, call us, till we rise
And run like children back to paradise
In loving arms, from out the seven seas ?

So small and far she is, so green and cold,
From shore to shore so narrow that the ear
Echoes Atlantic like a shell, and lips
Sing of the sea by instinct—This her hold,
Her soul is not dumb earth alone, but clear
Articulate water and returning ships.

NANCY POLLOK.

RIOT OF THE ROSE

O WELCOME, Riot of the Rose,
Exploding bomb of loveliness :
No lethal weapon you disclose,
Nor rivals slay in wantonness.

Your crimson barrage shakes the heart
And wounds to tears the seeking eye :
No carnage follows your keen dart,
Nor stain upon your spears doth lie.

Yet doth the red blood stain your cheek !
Not anger raiseth that proud tide :
You flaunt the banner of the meek ;
Your conquests in the heart abide.

HARRY SEFTON.

DIEPPE

19th August, 1942

IT started early, the attacking treck
by sea and sky. Early
and quietly, like a well-told lie.

His hair was very crisp and curly.
I ran my fingers through his hair while he expressed his views
on this and that and my new hat and the length of movie queues.
Nothing dramatic. And now he's—there. And I tune-in to the News.

The barge-like boats, packed panting tight,
eat up the narrow strip of water,
and in the sky the grey wings wait
poised on the edge of a well-planned slaughter.
I wait as well and see it right
in my mind's eye.
Then suddenly a white
smoky curtain covers the beach where the forsaken promenade winds its course,
and men charge up from the sea, hoarse
with excitement, afraid to swallow lest they miss a sound.
Then everywhere
the carefully-planned attacks mass in their place
and hundreds, hundreds falling in the race
for shelter from the stuttering guns ; falling face-
downwards, just a mile or two of sea between
them and us and all that might have been,
the trampled sand blinding already sightless eyes.

Yet, when all's said and done, who'd have it otherwise ?
Not they.
Women wait long enough for paradise
and if it's now—or in a million years—
it makes no odds. Their blood flows, and my tears
If I could shed them.

There's the pips
and news again of men and planes and ships.
But I already know, and feel my lips
grow cold and my heart a hot, hard ball
wedged in my throat. I know they could not all
come back.

JOYCE ROWE.

THE BRAVE TO WHOM FRONTIERS

THE brave to whom frontiers
Seem calm before attacking
Who in dark corners
Fear no danger lurking
Are happy in story
Where success in loving
Is hero's reward
And the prize for doing.

So these make love
A second encounter
Ending as quickly
And even with laughter ;
Heroic though they take
In this register
Life is too swift
And they miss the dearer.

But love is the death
That my heart dies from,
Passionate lips
And bright rebellion . . .
While even losing
And being alone
Is joyful sorrow
Of what was done.

So leave to others
The impersonal glories ;
Being alive
Makes the finest stories.
Let pride remain
In a few memories
Growing more lovely,
No hour disparages.

(Now serving in the Middle East). JOHN WALLER.

MAN

ALL thou, O manifold Nature, in Me wrought !
I who am Ego, Man, and Thought :
Thou stone, rock, granite, iron, or steel,
Thought subconscious at my keel.
Thou leaf, or flower, or fruit, or tree,
My tranquil thought surrendered unto Thee ;
Growing, rising, branching, sure,
Creative, passionless, and pure.
Thou fish, bird, animal, insect, man,
Ambitious thought of wider span ;
My active, driving, feeling thought ;
My heart sought,
My good and bad wrought
In suffering thought,
My jealous and desiring thought,
All thou, O manifold Nature in Me wrought !

I am song, I am speed, I am flight,
Spinner, weaver, builder, and parasite ;
Killer, creator,
Beast, angel, and more ;

Gentle, cooing dove
Or snake may prove ;
And faithful dog,
And greedy hog ;
And playful lamb,
And roaring lion I am ;
I am Love and Hate,
Heights and depths I mate ;
I am the Word made best,
And the Christ not yet made manifest :
I in thou, thou in me,
Ego, Thought—it came
To being before thy Matter was ;
Thy Cause—it was
"I AM."

VERE ARNOT.

RELEASE

AH! sleep!
may I go with you ?
And let this baser world dissolve
and fall apart ?
And with the ease and comfort
of a sigh
may I, too, merge
into the time unrolled ?
But first I'll feel again
the slow and sleepy heaven
of departing care,
the glad farewell
and final wave
of taut anxiety.
Drifting, let me drift
upon the popping bubbles
of reality,
and upward to the mist
that feels my eyes
and smooths my senses
to quieten all human questioning.
Gather round, O wispy heralders
of my reprieve,
come closer and I am
but a soul
fingering the darkness ;
and slowly I fade
and am not even that—
but unaware.

OXFORD

EVENING
and the spires
rise higher
in the peace ;
the city has settled
within its walls,
and the paleness
that will soon be yesterday
turns the clouds
to ostrich feathers
and departs.
A star is waiting
where the colours
cease to run,
and heaven's seats are taken
one by one,
and the watch is kept.

PAUL ROWLAND.

BANK HOLIDAY

THREE years ago this August holiday,
I watched a cricket match
In some far village in the Western shires ;
And afterwards drank tea in thin Crown Derby cups,
Then travelled home to bed in the serene and solemn evening.
To-day who can escape Globe-echoing War :
Catastrophe and triumph, rage and roar
Of restive armies, death on land and sea ;
Starvation, shooting, homeless refugee . .
Garrisons taken and lost,
Stealth stealing sabotage, whisper of espionage . .
Rivers crossed and re-crossed . .
Panic of poster, hope on the news horizon . .
Want as the night draws near,
Claw of the profiteer . .
Tales of new Eastern horror, death in the sun . .
Stories of slaughter, smuggled through swamp and snows ;
Thirst and exposure where the sand storm blows . .
Cries from Carpathia, butchered Bohemia,
All the world bleeding . . . . . .

And here am I, asleep beneath a hedge
In this dim corner of the embattled earth ;
Dreaming perhaps, but not of Schubert's songs,
Shakespeare in Arden, or of Helen's wrongs ;
But whether beans will be the breakfast ration,
If I have checked the tracings and the files,
Whether my boots will last to-morrow's miles.

L.A.A. Regt., R.A. DENNIS BIRCH.

BITTER HARVEST

JUST for a moment let us turn aside
From noise and tumult and the rolling tide
Of ceaseless conflict ; let us find
In this calm rural scene,
Where even now the wartime workers glean
Grain precious beyond wealth, the old-time joy
When we were girl and boy,
Fear, far behind.

It seems that some strange curtain is withdrawn
Showing a world where never now will dawn

Days careless, free, so safely ours,
So full of happiness.
New light has shone and what was frightened guess
Takes on the shape of crude reality;
And never shall we see
Illusioned hours.

The unity of earthly brotherhood
Has blossomed as disruption; in a flood
Come the loud cries, the murmers low
Of many souls in pain.
What balm shall heal the world and bring again
Gladness of spirit to these smitten ones;
What harvest of the guns
Can mankind show.

We too caught up in life's deep maelstrom now,
Who still can see the riches which endow
What might and should be ours to know,
What can we do but share
This sad misfortune, still repel despair,
Pledging eternal love and cherished rights,
Lost hopes, our lost delights,
Dear things that go.

RAYMUND BOURNE.

TIME MARCHES ON . . . . .

"TIME marches on"—but the fun of it really is
That Space and Time belong to God; are His,
Except in the vast roaring Continuum
Of Einstein's brain . . . The deep-throbbing drum
Of elliptical, endless change brings fractured strain,
Which gaily floats with all things down the drain
Of changing life and death . . . Still throbs the drum;
Remain the dregs, the pitiful weak scum
Of what we were, within the Time-Space Sink;
Death pulls the plug; and poets cease to think!
"Time marches on"—you cannot change it, poet;
Time ends, begins with life; you fear it, know it;
Leave Time to God, and don't waste thought and rhyme
On hymning it; you haven't got the time! . . . .

ALEXANDER HOWARD.

FROM HOPKINS TO WHISTLER

Robert Bridges, by Albert Guerard, Jr. (Harvard University Press, 3.50 dollars).
Gerard Manley Hopkins, by John Pick (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.;
Little Gidding, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 1s.)
Ode to the Sun, by Laurence Whistler (William Heinemann, Ltd., 6s.)
Challenge, by Wilfrid Gibson (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.)
The Flawless Stone, by Frank Kendon (Cambridge University Press, 1s.)
Forty Poems, by John Lehmann (New Hogarth Library, 3s. 6d.)
France, by Charles Morgan (Macmillan, Ltd, 1s.)
New Recessional, by Edward Thompson (Secker and Warburg, Ltd., 3s. 6d.)
Pastoral, by James Turner (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.)
Lost Planet, by Dorothy Wellesley (Hogarth, 6s.)

THIS list includes two important books by living poets, and important books about two poets of the near past to whom those of our generation owe much, and who owed much to one another.

A great deal has been written about Manley Hopkins since he was made known to the world by Bridges in 1918, but Mr. Guerard's book is the first comprehensive study that has been made of Bridges himself. The poet expressed the wish that no biography should be written of him and Mr. Guerard's book, except for a single page of biographical notes, is purely critical. It is exceedingly thorough and understanding and contains a most valuable and lucid account of the poet's theories of prosody. In his preface, Mr. Guerard refers to Bridges as "Seeming even more remote from the contemporary poetic situation than he did at the time of his death eleven years ago." But this apparent remoteness is, I think, delusive. Bridges has influenced our poetry powerfully in two ways: firstly (though in a less degree than Hopkins) by his experiments in prosody, and secondly, by the overwhelming success of his long philosophical poem, "The Testament of Beauty," published in 1929, on his 85th birthday. His ten plays and masques written between 1881 and 1904 have never been widely read or appreciated, and his earlier lyrics, collected in a single volume in 1913, are now chiefly known through the small number which have been enshrined in anthologies. But his deliberate concentration on the use of free speech-rhythms and his experiments in the use of accentual and syllabic verse undoubtedly opened the way for his successors to escape from the melodic sway of Tennyson and Swinburne. The success with which he applied some of his theories in the "Testament of Beauty" (a philosophical disquisition in 790 lines, which sold 40,000 copies within a few years of its publication) made poets and readers alike realise that the nineteenth century had not exhausted the possibilities of English prosody. Much of his interest in prosody was no doubt due to his friendship with Gerard Manley Hopkins, who, however, died before Bridges had begun his more serious experiments. Mr. Pick's book deals very little with this aspect of Hopkins' work. His principal object is to emphasise the great importance

to Hopkins' poetry of his enrolment in the Society of the Jesuits. His analysis of the poet's work is very complete and his exposition convincing. Hopkins is a difficult poet, and a true appreciation of his objective must help greatly to a general understanding of him. This study is, therefore, of very real value, and both Mr. Pick and Mr. Guerard have rendered lovers of English poetry important service.

Of the two living poets whose names stand at the head of my list, neither has any close affinity to the older poets, but it is perhaps not fanciful to see in "Little Gidding" some influence of the "Testament of Beauty." This is a short mystical poem, similar in style and outlook to "East Coker" and "Burnt Norton." It is written in irregular, unrhymed, accentual verse, freely following ordinary speech rhythms (two more formal lyrics are the least successful parts of the poem), and with a choice of language to which the following lines towards the end of the poem are beautifully applicable :

> where every word is at home,
> Taking its place to support the others,
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and the new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together.

Where the choice of words is so exquisite, one may be allowed two criticisms. The word "Sempiternal" at the beginning of the second line of the poem strikes rather a jarring note, and why does the poet coin the adjective "Behovely" and use it with a capital letter ? In general, however, the ease and aptness of his rhythms and the graceful harmony of his language make the reading of "Little Gidding" an aesthetic delight, as, for example, in the opening description of a bright winter noon :

> Mid-winter spring is its own season
> Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
> Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.
> When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
> The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
> In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
> Reflecting in a watery mirror
> A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.
> And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
> Stirs the dumb spirit : no wind, but pentecostal fire
> In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing
> The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell
> Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time
> But not in time's covenant. Now the hedgerow
> Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
> Of snow, a bloom more sudden

Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
Not in the scheme of generation.

The scene is at Little Gidding, once the scene of Nicholas Ferrar's famous religious experiment, and the reader is bidden to kneel there in prayer

You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.
And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

It would serve no purpose to attempt an analysis or summary of the poem, for though the language and syntax are clear enough, the thoughts which the poet aims at conveying are very elusive and cannot be apprehended, except through the actual language which he uses. Indeed, it is very hard to formulate even in one's own mind any precise and logical statement of the poem's intention. In this respect Eliot differs entirely from Manley Hopkins, whose thought is clear enough, his obscurity being entirely due to the liberties which he took with language and syntax. I will therefore leave "Little Gidding," with one more quotation, from the poet's brooding over the times in which Nicholas Ferrar carried through his humble experiment:

If I think, again, of this place,
And of people, not wholly commendable,
Of no immediate kin or kindness,
But some of peculiar genius,
All touched by a common genius,
United in the strife which divided them;
If I think of a king at nightfall,
Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
And a few who died forgotten
In other places, here and abroad,
And of one who died blind and quiet,
Why should we celebrate
These dead men more than the dying?
It is not to ring the bell backward
Nor is it an incantation
To summon the spectre of a Rose.
We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum.
These men, and those who opposed them
And those whom they opposed
Accept the constitution of silence
And are folded in a single party.

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us—a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death.
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.

Laurence Whistler's volume is a very long way from the harmonious twilight of "Little Gidding." Here is fire, passion and the crystal confidence of youth, and, more important than all, a real poetic gift which shews itself in brilliant metaphor, ringing rhythm and a use of words which is in the best sense original. The three finest poems in the volume are perhaps "The Burning Glass," "Rollo Latimer" and "Jacob Pennycuick." The first of these has already been mentioned in THE POETRY REVIEW; it is a symbolic story of love and birth in a bombed city:

She took the child, she climbed the stair,
And what should meet her gaze
But the mere wilderness of Hell
Where once a city was?
And even as she stared at it
Her thought was giving praise.

The earth was dead, and rotting dead,
But the air was howling mad.
It goggled with a crimson eye,
Grimaced and winked at her awry,
It laughed, and simultaneously
It screamed with level lead.
And she must venture through it all,
With all the faith she had.

She walked with fearful hand upraised,
She had no other shield.
She moved between the lines of blood,
And faces even with the mud
Were lifted to behold.
Mad faces cried on either side,
"A woman and a child!"

O many saw her gliding on
In a wild flash revealed,
A woman with white hand upraised
In benediction mild.
The weapons clattered out of hands,
The crooked fingers failed,

And a great shout arose, the first
That joined the thirsting in their thirst—
"The Virgin and the Child!" it burst,
"The Virgin and the Child!"

"Rollo Latimer" tells of a young airman's death in action at harvest time and of his spirit's appearance to his father in his vicarage garden :

"It is a little thing to die—
No gap—a little thing!
And nothing ends, and all that is
Goes on like a great song,

"And yet is fixed in the still pattern,
And life—how can I tell?
Comfort my mother if you can.
Say I am glad. Farewell."

The old man never winked a lid,
Yet not a thing was there,
Nor shape, nor movement where
The orchard and sprigged hill of corn
Looked tumbled out of Plenty's Horn
In hot Thanksgiving air,
And only wasps were diving
About a fallen pear.

Then up he rose in tears and crossed
The hurting sunlight to
A narrow wicket in the wall,
And round about him drew,
Murmuring "My son, my son,"
The mercies of a yew.

The church, remote and listening room,
Was charged with honey-coloured gloom.

And there above the still, unbroken
Breakers of two sheaves,
Wild with half-believing, he,
Hungering for certainty,
Searched the holy leaves,

Searched and found in many places
Many reasons for belief,
Neither time nor self regarding,
Neither joy nor grief.
"And this is the promise," cried the pages,
"Even eternal life."

The apples and the marrow,
The loaves and liquid comb,
Washed around the silent column,
Ringed his feet with foam,
Because another year had spilled
Into that naked room.

"This is the promise!" sang the apples,
At every quarter chime.
"World without end," the marrow sang,
And the comb the same.
And brilliant on the serious wall
The words of Faith above them all
Burned on through seeming time.

This is a poem not to be read without tears, by those who have suffered. "Jacob Pennycuick" was first printed in THE POETRY REVIEW—a sustained poem that should be read as a whole. The "Dancer in Darkness," with which the volume closes is a longer and more ambitious poem and not quite so successful. It has brilliant and moving passages, but is rather too long and sags a little here and there.

In the "Ode to the Sun" Whistler uses an accentual speech-rhythm which he manages just as effectively as the ballad metres of the narrative poems. The Ode describes the poet sitting at night in a tower room in an island of lamplight and revolving in his mind

The luminous images of departed day:
The shock of a river at dawn—a swift on the path—
The view from a tower—an argument quenched in laughter.
But when I raise my eyes
There is only night with its close, impalpable waves.

At one o'clock
There came a beetle up my difficult shore
With its little drop of private darkness climbing.
At two, a moth about my island whirled,
Blurring the printed, or the mutable, page,
And startled me like an accusing finger
When it dropped on the word "alone" with a little click.
At three, there is an owl far from my island,
Who with a sorry shriek
Projects on it his cruel thought and nails.

At once I am given
A vision of the enormity of the night,
With Europe, Asia, Africa, lapped in the one
Chasm of darkness, the one negation of hope.
And I see night as a symbol of lacking and waiting,
And that obscure blue cry
As the voice of a hemisphere mourning a personal loss.

His thoughts turn to God's miracle of life in mastodon and man :

"The monsters are gone, the improbable ventures,
Who failed like the penny-farthing through being too big :'

and what of man :

"To whom you have given Thought,
Like a grain of radium dropped in a box of bone."

"He is proved by his power ;
And what may not feel the punch of that distant ambition
Now matter has yawned and opened the door on its secrets
Sudden and shocking as the glint of gold in a tomb,
And he gropes with a torch through the anteroom of the tomb ?"

But the time has come to put away childish things :

Feed to the flames
The first atavistic hunger, the hunger to own,
To establish between oneself and a mill or a vineyard,
Useful to all, or a mountain, which merely exists,
That relationship wholly unreal, superstitious, absurd ;
The magpie folly, bright things in a secret hole.
Then the folly of flags and tunes, and letting an accent,
Or a slant of the eyes, split in diabolical halves
What is single and sacred, you and your equal, a man.
Yes, the horrible and subtle folly of Class—Injustice
Walking in the main street, a chalk-white leper, noticed
By nobody. O feed them the folly of always seeking
The wrong kingdom, of taking thought for the morrow—
Taking care of the pence—
While Mammon inhabits the humble and obedient mind.

These extracts will give some idea of Whistler's thought and capacity. He has grown both in confidence and power since the publication of *In Time of Suspense* and this book is one to be bought and read again and again. For no one writing to-day seems better fitted than its author to be the poet of the new Britain which the poets must help to build for us after the war.

I have only space to deal very briefly with the remaining books in the list.

Wilfrid Gibson and Lady Dorothy Wellesley are writers of established reputation and these short volumes follow lines familiar to their admirers. Mr. Gibson's consists wholly of brief poems descriptive of the war and the deeds of savagery and heroism which it has begotten. Perhaps the best is "The Peacocks," the grotesque horror of which is startlingly effective :

The peacocks, roosted in the cedar-boughs
With long tails drooping, in a sudden fright
Awaken at a crash ; and see the house

Burst into instant flame and fire the night
With a red roaring blaze of fearful light:
And one by one they rustle to the ground
And rive with eldritch yells the raddled air,
In antic futile panic prancing round
Like outcast monarchs raging in despair,
With widespread tails resplendent in the glare,
As into a red pit of ruin falls
The ancient pride of their ancestral halls.

Lady Dorothy Wellesley works a more precious vein and "Lost Planet" contains many effective lines and stanzas, such as these from "Paradise":

Yea, but this myself have seen:
A dappled doe in brake,
Sleeping warm around her fawn
Above the lily lake.
This have I watched at opening dawn,
Have watched until she wake.

Then when she will, O then she will
Her dapples from her shake
Her coins of silver round her spill,
Her golden discs drop down until
Her dews of diamond flake;
Till all the ferns her chequer feign
And all the rough conspires to make
A woodland lovelier for her sake,
To rob the sunlight off the rain
That falls beyond the hill.

Till, coming to the lily lake,
She'll paddle to her belly,
Swimming with fawn at break of dawn
From lily until lily;
And turning long and rosy tongue
Round lightest leaf and lily bud
Will feed the white child of her blood
On a morning water-lily.

Mr. Lehmann excels in recording briefly and movingly the important trifles of personal experience, as in "River Garden":

Towards the evening of an August day,
Tired with the tumult and shrill noise of play,
Through purple beetroot and green cabbage beds
A boy creeps down among the potting sheds.

The fragments of old flower-pots are laid
In heaps beside a loam-encrusted spade.

A bonfire smoulders by the refuse mound.
The thick, sweet ropes about his head are wound.

No moving creature breaks the dream he weaves
But one lean cat beneath the pumpkin leaves.

He shakes the branches on the southern wall.
Two smooth, red nectarines beside him fall.

Under the sky's translucent bowl he stands
Holding the ripened fruit in his soiled hands,
And listens to the jingling tunes that float
Downriver with the last excursion boat.

Mr. Edward Thompson has a strong sense of satire and a considerable fertility. His "Ode for a not too solemn Music" is good fun and was worth writing. He has, perhaps, more potentiality than any other of the poets in the list, after Whistler;

"Do the Dead Talk ?"—a Dean and Bathing Belle offer to tell.
"Souvenir Numbers"—each that buys possesses pictures of crooners,
crooks, baby princesses.
"I have done with Love, declares Miss Attadaisy."
"Film Queen walks out, says Hollywood's just crazy."
"Great day for Britain's Quads"; "News of the Quins."
"Bishop proclaims the age is one of sins."
Now my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Pack up your troubles ! damn you, smile, smile, smile !

Yet I have seen the dread behind your faces.
I know the secret places
Where terror lurks—the fright that comes with pain—
The sense of lessening strength and tiring brain—
Of life gone by, of vanished hope and chances—
The ill that is, the good that merely seems,
The ghost in each, whose visage shakes our dreams.
I think with you, our treatment has been rotten;
"God's Englishmen" our Patron has forgotten.
This is no way to treat His Anglo-Saxons !
With drums and trombones, saxophones and klaxons,
With blare of "dramas" here and there "romances,"
With bang and clash and clang and crash of trumpets,
With such a mob of doomsters, barkers, strumpets,
To deave this generation to the tomb,
Like cattle yelled and bellowed to their doom.

Mr. James Turner's "Pastoral" describes the four seasons of the year with a wealth of detailed observation and a contrasting undercurrent of personal feeling. Like much modern work, it lacks the firmness of

outline which is so necessary to poetic effect. The same is true of Mr. Frank Kendon's Seatonian Prize poem "The Flawless Stone" and to a less extent, of Mr. Charles Morgan's sincere and scholarly "Ode to France," of which I will quote the closing stanzas :

Happy is he who, like Ulysses, returns,
After profound exile, unto his own,
To find a healing in his hills and rivers,
To hear spoken again
The little words of love
That have no meaning save in the private ear—

Happy to hear the great words, long abused,
Resume their sovranty ; take down his bow
And drive the traitors out. O happy love
Which, in the wordless song
Of things remembered, learns
How young is age, the span of faith how long !

Thou art the wisdom, O France, within all knowledge,
The salt of all delight. Who dies for thee
Dies for mankind's perpetual redemption ;
And none can live in thee
That has not died the death of saints and lovers
And been raised up, in hate and holiness,
To beat down Satan under thy feet.

C.T.

A POET OF PLACES

Pilgrimage : Memorials of a Journey (The Columbia Press, 1931).
With Odysseus : Mediterranean Landfalls (Lovat Dickson, 1936).
(A third sequence of travel poems by Mr. S. F. A. Coles, *Cities of Troy : Memorials of Peace-time travel in Greece, Magna Graecia and Asia Minor,* has just been published by Percy Lund Humphries and Co., Ltd.) (5s. net).

THERE is a note of truculent certainty in poetry to-day, an attitude of take-it-or-leave-it, which is inclined to be tiresome. But there is one modern poet who is humble and pious, and because of (not despite) these now unusual attributes has produced an ethereal quality of beauty in his work. He has published two volumes of poetry, neither of which excited the interest or appreciation it deserved ; because his work does fill what would otherwise be a void in modern poetry.

S. F. A. Coles' first book, *Pilgrimage : Memorials of a Journey,* covers a large field, taking him from England through France, Italy, India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The first few poems were written in England, and besides stating his quest : a Pilgrimage to the shrine of Beauty, they tell something of the man who wrote them ;

someone disappointed in the world, nostalgic for "the love of other days" and groping to find the meaning and source of Beauty.

The first poems are placid, lucid and faintly maudlin; but in "Cotswold Landscape"—a poem which has been praised by the Poet Laureate—besides showing a talent for choosing a happy phrase and neat versifying, he infuses a breathlessness, inherent in subsequent work, and acceptance. By purely objective statement of scenery (there is no questioning, no elaboration) something of the feeling of peace and sense of beauty is transported to the reader.

There is nothing passionate in the book ("Love, I have waited long to meet you"). His various metres are strict, sometimes making a poem sound like a hymn ("Night") or song. Some poems are addressed directly to dead men—Leonardo da Vinci, Keats, Rhodes; they are detached and impersonal, yet sometimes revealing a thread of the author's mind, for he speaks of Leonardo's age as that when "Royal art found Royal thanks." Perhaps there was a subsidiary quest apart from the healing of the "human smart" he had sustained, at the Shrine of Beauty. But his air of bitterness and grievance beneath the surface is a fault; his best poems are free from it.

In his disregard of superficialities he sees clearest what is timeless, and he has a deep *sense* of history:

"The calm sea smiled, as smiled it when the Phoacians came."

In Italy he finds happiness, and in the Sabine hills he writes:

> . . . the ceaseless song of birds
> thrills through the aisles of sacerdotal cypress,
> and the scent-laden air
> is murmurous with living waters.

In reading it, the mind unconsciously thinks of *O fons Baudusiae,* where the atmosphere is frighteningly similar—"frighteningly" because it brings you face to face with the reality of time and history—and timelessness. The echo of the past is always there, often in lament for the lost glory of Rome:

> Bats fly about the mighty halls
> Where Romans bathed beneath a Roman sky.

Visiting the Taj Mahal at night, the suspense, the mystery and love are delicately translated in "The Flame," one of the best poems in the book:

> After the first shock of ecstasy
> We held our breath,
> As if one sigh of earthly contact
> Should mar the vision, banish it into nothingness . . . .
> A flame beckoned us into the temple,
> Into the honeyed silence—

Where the lovers
Sleep their eternal sleep.

Coles has the gift of knowing when to abandon metre. The last lines are brittle like butterfly wings; one feels they should be whispered. The flame cringing and swaying on the alter; the incense; the silence where the lovers are buried, for the Taj Mahal is their shrine.

In "New Zealand Idyll" he finds more beauty, lying hidden in the dress of a pink-rose Cerasus:

The reeds gently bowed to the lilies—
Creamy cups on their jade saucers cool.
At the foot of the two-rose Cerasus,
The regal, the radiant Cerasus . . .

He is fascinated by the sea. Again and again he describes it, seeing in its timelessness the transience of history:

Rude crags arise!
Green mountains pierce the azure—
Weep on, black sands,
Veiled like wives of Asshur . . .

White horses, feathers, lace—with all of these has foam been compared; never before to an eastern veil, a picturesque metaphor, typical of this poet's surprising and effective choice of words. God he sees in trees, in flowers, in Holy Night; Beauty he sees in the crumbled remains of the past.

The Envoi (another of the poems which pleased Dr. Masefield), in its metrical form and sounds put into words (the bell tolling *Angelo* . . . . *Angelo*—Eliot has since written "the bell's perpetual angelus") conjures a picture and atmosphere of the cloister.

Water
    drips
Into the marble pool
Where goldfish
    play
In shadows cool
Of solemn cypress:
Water
    drips
(*Drip . . drip-drip . . drip*!)
Into the silent pool.

Not all the poems in *Pilgrimage* are successful; occasionally a word rankles: but it is a modest testament of talent and sensibility. Perhaps the only fundamental fault is that of over-coolness and—detachment; the lack of passion and personality leaves them as lifeless as the Parthenon —but there is beauty there. The book promised much for the future, a promise, I consider, fulfilled in his next book.

II.

Coles has a muse with wings that hover over the earth, but cannot settle there—her wings get in the way, are out of place. And so, turning again to *With Odysseus** I cannot find any application to the present: the poems are testaments of beauty experienced in the past—delicate, archaic, distant. The dedication admits his disregard of criticism, and he wants only to "worship priestlike at the Throne of Art"; but can beauty have any meaning for us if it is unrelated to our experience, divorced from the scope of our lives?

It is a selfish book; yet paradoxically humble and unassertive. His poetry cannot escape the fetters of metre, which lends an atmosphere of austerity and stiffness. It was George Moore who said that "There must be rules in poetry if only for the pleasure of breaking them, just as you must have women dressed if only for the pleasure of undressing them."

Many of his lyrics lose by familiarity, but sometimes a clumsy poem leads up to a memorable line ("The unreturning lava of my scorn"). The sonnet form is very suited to his style, and "Shadows of a Magnitude" is neat and moving, with just the faintest falling off in the last two lines. Another sonnet, "Dawn at Carthage," soars to unaccustomed heights, where scarcely a phrase jars. "Night in Egypt" too is faultless, with an exciting, breathless air:

> The sky has blossomed into crimson eve:
> The white-robed Fellahin diminish, homewards,
> Over the desert dunes; so silently,
> Silently! merging with the Infinite.

The experience brought him into contact with God.

In other poems one hardly notices how the poet skates from the Olympian Gods to Christianity, the division is imperceptible, reconciling as Gibbon did the Rome of the Emperors and the Popes. He makes an interesting point in "The Philosopher"; that without love "all the wisdom of the world is dead." In the eyes of a girl "On the Road to Tangier" he reads for an instant the solution of the riddle of time:

> Eyes that haunt me in memory,
> Filled with wise and wondering resignation,
> Shining upon me from the veil's white horizon
> Across long, inexplicable centuries.

The solution may be an illusion, false; but the feeling is there, the biblical "love" of the spirit. While in a short poem, written climbing the Greek Steps at Capri, the delight is physical, and infectious through the passion of the last line—an echo, of course, of Shelley:

> *Schon*! then *Schon*!! ecstatic Fräuleins cry,
> Plunging in crystal, sun-bombarded sea;

*Chosen for a special reading before the President and Members of The Poetry Society on October 28th, 1936.

Gaunt cliffs bear Caesar's ruins, pines fan blue sky—
O world, O life, O time—O Italy!

Sometimes a poem is laboured, not spontaneous, not an emotion recollected in tranquillity. Into this category falls "The Glory of Burgos," which reads like a versified guide book. "Death in Seville" was inspired by a strong feeling, but it is thin and flat, unworthy of being subject-matter for a poem. These are two faults in the book; there is a third one that might fit into either of the others: that is, writing in a tone alien to his nature. In "Thoughts in a Wide Landscape" he does abandon metre, leaving the page sprawled like the work of Ezra Pound; but the poem is not unsuccessful, if a trifle naïve:

And these shoes
which have carried me through Greece, Italy and Spain
have lost the dust of greater riches
than banks will ever hold.

In the poem, "After a long talk with Ezra Pound" the clash of his own and his assumed style is complete. Another poem, "Cape Aguilas," after T. S. Eliot's example, suffers from an overdose of cynicism, which does not suit him. It is about going in Spain to meet a girl he was in love with long ago in Kensington. This is the last stanza—is it a parody?:

When will this fever leave me—damn the place!
I took too long a journey on *that* road:
How hot it is and how my pulse-beats race—
She did not know me, but the cake was good.

I have devoted the last paragraphs to his faults, but—as Jonson said of Shakespeare—there was ever more in him to be praised than pardoned. There are memorable lines:

The sun essays to woo
Lizards that dart in fright
Beyond his amorous light.

or:

Coy rivers thro' the gardens murmuring
Of distant thoughts, and glades where lovers sing.

or:

White-robed clouds dandle the moon for sport.

These quiet images stand higher by a head than such outbursts as:

. . . . . souls
Bedamned with catch-words, mob hysteria
And futile disillusions
As ours are in this absurd age.

There is an echo of D. H. Lawrence's "Pansies" there.

I have said that some poems lose by familiarity; but against this others there are that I shall constantly turn to. "Night in Sigüenza" has the freshness of his first book, but added to it a polish which experience

gave him. He has developed his style, and, as long as he does not attempt the slickness and daring of the moderns, it is good to saunter with him through those countries of Europe that are changing daily. His is the eye of a pilgrim, and when he returned from his journeys he published these memorials that the years might not be entirely lost, nor the beauty of a lifetime forgotten.

JOHN R. WHITEHEAD.

RANK AND FILE

Written upon the 450th anniversary of the first sighting of land by Rodrigo de Triana, a seaman in one of the caravels accompanying Christopher Columbus.

ONE held the New World in his eye,
Treasure beyond the gold and Indians his pocket yearned.
Rodrigo de Triana was his name,
Seaman in *Nina*, one of the caravels.
Little I know him. For all his fame
Is the name of him, centuries in print,
By his chance earned.

Did he grow old, bearing that image,
The New World, land seen on a Friday ?
Did he tell the tale : "It was October,
The twelfth of the month, in the morning . . ." ?

Out of the alleys and arches and inns of Europe,
Such sailed with handiness and seaman skill,
Plighting here love and there goodwill,
Familiars to whom a story could be told
Of America, rarer than Indians and gold.

Rodrigo, Rodrigo, seaman look-out,
The New World held in his eye ;
Unlettered, tongue-tied, in the European triumph
For Don Columbus under the hot royal sky.
Upon what tide of chance and humbled fortune
—A sailor's, soldier's, airman's treasure in his head—
Nothing in hand, did he yield his body to a last sea-bed !

Leaving a kiss or a name in print or sons so bred
Gladly to ride the elements, not for a tale to be told
Of America, Europe or gold,
But because the eye is wide and blood is red.

Flight-Lieut. JOHN PUDNEY.

LINES TO THE BOURGEOISIE

WHEN we have given you the vital victory—
the power, the pride, the freedom you bargained for;
what will you do for us—
we who shall have won the war?
When the marauder's howl is no longer heard
and peace brings goodwill to men—
what will be our reward?
What will become of us?
How will you treat us then—?

When you are free again to go your way
down pleasure's path, mellowed by warmer weather,
then will you remember us—we
who stood between you and the foe, together?
When war's infernal passion has burned down
to memory's ashy embers—when
the last dictator has been bound
and put away, by us—
how will you treat us then—?

When all is well again with you and yours
and to you who have, again shall it be given—
will you forgive us then our poverty and sin
as your dear father would who art in heaven?
When you no longer need us as you do now,
when the work is done, blood shed, the wealth and glory remain—
will you remember us?—And how?
How will you treat us then—?

San Francisco — DONALD J. PAQUETTE.

For some years I have been writing "in the wilderness." As an artist, I had noticed how many magazines were devoted to arts and crafts and had often wished there was a similar wealth of publications for would-be poets. Recently a friend introduced me to your delightful POETRY REVIEW. I at once sent my subscription and became a member of the Poetry Society.

May I thank you for the good work that you are doing in bringing poetry to the people? I am convinced that THE POETRY REVIEW will be a voice in the land—a voice that will be heard above the clamour of present upheavals. I wish you every success. Please do your best to establish a standard for poets similar to that granted to artists through exhibitions and examinations. Without checking up, at least eleven different "degrees" or "letters after one's name" come to my mind (for artists). Yet there is no standard by which the public may judge the merits of a poet. Perhaps your journal will be the pioneer.

Bilston, Staffs. — W. PHILIP HODGKINSON, A.J.D., M.R.S.T.

THE POETRY OF AKBAR ALLAHABADI*

AKBAR Allahabadi, whose full name was Sayed Akbar Husain, was born in 1846. Mughal ideals and mode of life were in fashion at that time. Even the officials of the East India Company observed Mughal etiquette. They took delight in dressing themselves occasionally in flowing robes, smoked huqqas with rich bowls and elaborate pipes, wrote Persian and Urdu verse, relished *cabobs* and *pilaos,* and occasionally married Indian ladies. Some of the time-honoured customs, which are regarded as social evils, like the *purdah* or *gosha,* had a definite significance in those days. Women had an important position in the domestic life ; they could read and interpret religious literature, some of them wrote poetry and composed beautiful songs, they had their fairs, the *mina-bazars,* and went out to gardens, riversides or other beautiful spots to admire the beauty of nature, or the work of man. They considered it dignified to move about in palanquins and litters, and for the amorous there was always ample scope for dalliance and adventure behind flimsy veils and thin screens. Such was the cultural atmosphere in which Akbar was born and grew up. He was also educated according to the Oriental system, *Daras Nizamia,* and learnt English only in the latter part of his life.

In 1857 occurred the Mutiny, the constitutional result of which was the abolition of the Mughal Court at Delhi, the disappearance of the last vestiges of sovereignty other than British within British India, and the termination of the powers and privileges of the East India Company. But this constitutional change brought in its wake many changes in the cultural and political outlook of the people, and as a result of them the younger generation began to imitate Western customs and manners in an indiscriminate way. God had endowed Akbar with an extraordinary sense of humour so he laughed when he saw young men strutting about in badly tailored suits, or showing fondness for English dishes and simultaneously committing mistakes in table manners ; or dancing with European ladies without knowing the rhythm of steps or the rise and fall of occidental music.

Akbar remained in the service of the British Government until he retired on pension through old age. He joined as a Reader and gradually rose to the position of a Sessions Judge, and the Government gave him the title of Khan Bahadur as a mark of their appreciation of his service. Akbar enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the higher officials of the U.P. Government. In 1932, when I was at Oxford, Sir Richard Burn, who was the Chief Secretary to the Government of United Province, invited me to lunch with some dons of the University. It will always remain a memorable function for me, but the reason why I refer to it now is that Sir Richard entertained us by reciting the poems of

*The essence of a lecture given at the 84th meeting of the Hyderabad Centre of The Poetry Society.

Akbar and translating them into English. Sir Richard has a wonderful memory and he is also an adept in translating Urdu verse. I shall never forget his translation of the couplet which Akbar composed when the Jamiat-ul-Ulama, particularly Maulawi Abdul Bari of Farangi Mahall, joined the Congress. The couplet is this :

Buddhu miyan bhi hazrate Gandhi ke sath hain ;
Khud to hain mushte khak par andhi ke sath hain.

Buddhi in Sanskrit means "wisdom", *Buddha* "the enlightened," but *Buddu* in Hindi as well as Urdu sarcastically means "simpleton." Sir Richard Burn interpreted the verse to us thus :

The foolish Muslim has made pact with the all-wise Gandhi
He (or his community) is a handful of dust which will be scattered when meeting the wind-storm.

Akbar was a patriot, but not a reactionary ; he did not join any political party but laughed at the weaknesses of all. His rippling wit and transparent sincerity made him popular with the Hindu and Muslim alike, even with the so-called "sun-dried bureaucrats," an example of whom in Sir Richard Burn I have given above.

The "quick-march" of the so-called reforms in religious practices, social conditions, educational system and political ideals of India gave Akbar incentive to ridicule them, and he has done that in a variety of most pleasant forms, in single verses (*Ash'ar*), quatrains (*Ruba'ist*) and longer poems (*Qat'at*). They are all permeated with his genuine love of his country, and respect for its culture ; and also enlivened by a humour, which being spontaneous, always appeals to the heart. Some critics have found lack of grace and poetic form in Akbar's verse, but the poet disdained conventionality and he has replied to them thus :

Whoever accuses me of ignorance of poetic form,
I must remain silent before him :
He will accuse the nightingale also as not-knowing how to sing,
The rigidity of such a critic is indeed to be admired.

and again :

Kaihte hain sha'iri ye tiri bi-usul hai,
Kaihta hun saf main to nahin tujh ko manta.
Main ne kaha ke apki karta jo pairawi,
To ap ki siwa ko'i mujh ko na janta.

Akbar has a large number of lyric poems (*ghazliyat*) to his credit and also some *qasidas,* paneygrical odes ; among the latter his *qasida,* composed on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the late Queen Victoria, has become a classic. But in the field of lyric poetry he suffered by comparison with his contemporary Hali, whose sweet diction and lofty ideas have placed Akbar's *ghazals* in the background. Akbar's charm, however, lies in his spontaneousness, in his instinctive wit and humour,

in his deep national pride and in his balanced views regarding the progress of Indians in the various aspects of life.

Akbar was a great friend and admirer of the late Sir Sayed, and there are a number of poems in which he has referred to Sir Sayed's views, sometimes with banter, sometimes with respect. Akbar was deeply religious and also had a keen sense of self-respect, which he found difficult to maintain under a foreign government. His views were, however, not of an extreme type, and he was a staunch advocate of steady and orderly progress.

Akbar has also translated with considerable success the poems of some English poets, among which his metrical rendering of Southey's well-known lines on the Falls of Lodore is the best : it is often included in the school text-books.

Let me give a few versions of his poems on national and social life :

Hindu and Muslim both are of the same family,
Closely related, both being Asiatic,
Living in a common land, speaking a common language and having a common fate,
Why shouldn't I call them "brothers."

Again on Hindu-Muslim unity :

"Born in this country, blessed with the special complexion of this country, speaking the tongue of this country, relishing the food of this country Why should they be out of tune and not harmonise in the country's song."

Akbar considered that the dissensions between the two communities are natural ; but not such that they should not be reconciled like the members of a common family.

Akbar's well-known lines on the *purdah system,* in which he has expressed his feelings with his characteristic humour :

I noticed some ladies walking without the veil ;
Akbar felt unnerved through feelings of national honour.
I enquired of the ladies what they had done with their veils,
They replied, "Our veils have been used up in shrouding the wisdom of men."

Afterwards Akbar seems to have felt the force behind the movement ; so he has toned down his opposition. The beauty of these lines can best be appreciated by those who know the Urdu language, but for those who are not conversant with Urdu I may translate the lines :

How long will the ladies be kept behind the screen,
How long will you lord over them in this country ?
When you are deprived of the sword to defend their honour,
The flimsy screens will not protect them.
The temperaments are changing fast under the influence of the West,
How long will old ideals, sentiments and feelings survive ?
The poor may tie sheets in the Third and Intermediate classes to conceal their wives ;

But the windows of the female compartments of the First and Second classes will not remain closed any longer.
When Satan is prompting that the brides should be unveiled,
The daughters of Eve will not be able to observe the *pordah* any longer.
Akbar is a supporter of the *purdah* system,
But how long will his views and quatrains last ?

Akbar was an advocate of the female education, but he did not consider Western ideals suitable for the girls of this country. He writes :

"Female education is absolutely necessary, but the system should be such that on completing the course they should be the heads of the household, and not the fairies of society."

and again :

"But the education should be suitable, such as may tend to increase the prestige of the Indian woman among the women of the world."

But he vehemently opposed their imitating their European sisters.

In politics he was a follower of Sir Sayed's views. He writes :

There is a philosophy of sword and there is also a philosophy of absolute silence,
The remaining schools of thought are only spider's web.

In the following line he cleverly makes a digression, apparently to divert the attention of the reader from the appreciation of the political condition of the country, and relates a love-episode with his characteristic humour :

On the night of union some misapprehensions arose,
As a result of them I took her for a fairy and she took me for a fiend.

Akbar's language is always very simple, his criticism most appropriate, although sometimes unvarnished ; but the principal feature why the poet's verse gained such popularity among all classes in India is the poet's overwhelming wit. I recite before you some of his verses which have become almost proverbial. The poet has ridiculed both the religious idea regarding the growing of beard, and the modern fashion of clean-shave.

Real culture is that which is embued with religious tradition :
He is only really free who observes discipline ;
Polished manners show humility as well,
Perfect speech is that which indicates a belief in God also.

Regarding the superficiality of the present education he writes :

He has passed this examination and that examination ; but has neither a creative mind, nor possesses any sterling merits ;
He is, however, satisfied since the success of his examination has been published in newspapers.

Akbar noticed a spirit of disrespectfulness and indiscipline among the students, so he has complained against the system of education :

We consider that all such books should be confiscated,
By the study of which the boys consider their parents stupid.

He also disdained the craze of self-advertisement :

> I do not want any cash from your pocket,
> But pray publish my name in your paper.
> Everyone is to be seen at the Pioneer office,
> With the request—For God's sake print my name in some place.

Akbar deprecates the vanities of the world, but when mentioning "the love of beautiful women," he jocosely remarks that by their charm he is also not free. Bernard Shaw is admired in England and all English-speaking countries not on account of his socialistic views, but for the felicity of expression and extraordinary sense of humour. Similarly the popularity of Akbar rests neither on his political views, nor on his views in regard to the social conditions of his time ; but on the irresistible charm of his mirthful verse. Akbar may be considered a retrograde as regards his views ; but his sparkling wit will long be admired.

GULAM YAZDANI.

ORISON

MY small son tossed a ball in to the air,
Then came to me, and cried
"See how it fell to earth each time I tried !
Say, will it never reach the sky ?"
To which I, smiling, made reply,
"Perhaps the earth is jealous of the air
And wants to keep you and your ball down here."

And then again—it seemed so short a time—
He drove a chariot thwart the sky,
Rending the clouds, and circling the sun.
(So surely must the ancient gods have done,
Hailing each star with merry jest and cry).
He, who with every breath
Cried brother to mankind,
And held all life a trust from God to men—
He drove a load of dire relentless death.

And yet I know the load of bombs he bore
Was as a Holy Grail,
Whereby he made Communion, and kept tryst
With the world's greatest pacifist—even Christ.

And now I toss a ball in to the air,
A ball of faith, that always falls to earth
And will not stay.

GLADYS WARR.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XCVI

Leslie Nelson Jennings has chosen for his *mise en scene* in *Mill Talk and other Poems* (The Fine Editions Press, New York) the habits of the simple folk, as his title suggests. He is accredited with fastidious craftsmanship and integrity. Born in Massachusetts, he was among the many who went west to California where he found impetus for his talents in the company of George Sterling and others. In the first sequence he introduces to us a personality who, as an old mill owner, has to accept the leaving home and not returning of his two sons:

Pride is a poor possession. Once I tried
Saying a little of what I'd thought and planned.
Of course they listened, but they couldn't hide
That unbelief—they didn't understand.
Well, after this I felt it wasn't right
Keeping the boys at home against their will,
And so I said no more, gave up the fight.
They've turned their backs on me and Wolf Pit Hill.

Not that I'm bitter. Only, when they went
I had a queer conviction our good-bye,
In spite of letters and vacations, meant
A sort of ending useless to deny.
Strange how the deepest things leave no more trace
Than a spring freshet slipping through the race.

A nostalgic note is struck in "Deep Woods": in the frenzied horror of this epoch it strikes home:

If it were so—a sudden turn in the track
And the cool gloom of the deep woods descending,
No questioning of the way, no looking back
From quietude unbroken and unending—

Then I could understand what it might mean
Walking softly on brown fern long bedded
Silence by the spring and moss eternally green;
These are not things mysterious or dreaded.

After the dusty road and the heat of the sun,
To slip securely into such secret places,
Knowing that here the red fox need not run
From huntsman or hound for ever on his traces.

That would be nothing to fear, though I wandered, lost,
Farther than Summer under the dark boughs bending,
Feeling the brittle solitude of frost,
And the chill gloom of the deep woods descending.

In *Blood for a Stranger,* by Randell Jarrell (Harcourt, Brace, New York) we have the first book of a poet who grew up in Tennessee and California who taught two years at Kenyon College, living now in Austin, where he is on the faculty of the University. His work has appeared in leading periodicals. Many of the poems in this collection are sharp arraignments and involve satirical comments. Mr. Jarrell's command of the English tongue is most arresting. Affronted by the days we live in Mr. Jarrell says in

"Bad Music" :

I sit, sit listening ; my lashes droop
And the years come close around me like a crowd
Of the strangers I knew once ; and they say nothing,
And I see at last that they were never mine.
The breast opening for me, the breaths gasped
From the mouth pressed helplessly against my wrist
Were lies you too believed ; but what you wanted
And possessed was, really, nothing but yourself ;
A joy private as a grave, the song of death.

. . . . . To be happy, really,
Where your small light is seen and shining
High over the millions who breathe and wait and sparkle
With the rain's globes, the worlds that roll like laughs
To the dark stream and its immediate sea ?
Of those millions how many know or love at all
You, Anna ? A few ; so few. Enough.
This world holds more than we can see or say,
And it stuffs us like a goose before it kills us.

From "The Winter's Tale," which is a tough one, we quote :

We who have possessed the world
As efficiently as a new virus ; who classified the races,
Species, and cultures of the world as scrub
To be cleared, stupidity to be liquidated, matter
To be assimilated into the system of our destruction ;
Are finding how quickly the resistance of our hosts
Is built up can think, "To-morrow we may be remembered
As a technologist's nightmare, the megalomaniacs
Who presented to posterity as their justification
The best armies that the world ever saw."
Who made virtue and poetry and understanding
The prohibited reserves of the expert, of workers
Specialised as the ant-soldiers ; and who turned from their difficult
Versions to the degenerate myth, the cruelties
So incredible and habitual they seemed escapes.

Have Come, Am Here, by Jose Garcia Villa (Viking Press, New York) is a first volume from a young native of the Philippines, introduced by a glowing comment from Mark Van Doren :

> "Mr. Villa seems to me to possess one of the purest and most natural gifts discoverable anywhere in contemporary poetry. This accounts for his power to say quietly the most astonishing and exalted things."

The unusual texture of Mr. Villa's poetry proclaims itself at once in the first poem and so on through the book :

It is what I never said,
What I'll always sing—
It's not found in days,
It's what always begins
In half dark, in half light.

It's shining so curved
Yet rises so tall and tells
Where the first flower dove
When God's hands lost love.
It's a great word without sound

Without echo to reveal
Where fragrance went down!

O, but it's all of it there
Above my poems a wreath.

Fragile Armor, a talented book by Frances Angevine Gray, is presented by the Torch Press. Mrs. Gray has found publication in many of the poetry magazines including THE POETRY REVIEW, to whom she is no stranger. We think very fine her "Legacy":

How can I make you amends, my child,
In a time like this,
For bringing you into a world
Bound for the abyss?

The cross sinks in the welter,
The lamp and the book shed no light,
The ancient certainties alter,
We march into night.

This recall for your solace,
When I leave you alone,
There is no new tribulation
The race has not known.

We have learned all of grief since the cave-men,
Yet hope perseveres.
Forever from hand to hand, courage
Is a torch down the years.

Through these pages we find the quick acceptance of the beautiful and the refusal of all things unlovely. This author has been complimented by many authorative judges.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

In sending $5.00 to cover the eighth year of my delight in your excellent magazine, I wish to mention the many really splendid poems which have lifted my heart with their beauty and fire, or stimulated my mind with their thought during the past year. Some of them, "Immortal," by Evelyn Couchman; "Death-History," by N. K. Cruickshank; "Sweet Pretender," by Phyllis Lyth, and "None Wake," by the same author; "The Ivy," by G. Rostrevor Hamilton; "Hereafter?" by H. W. Harding; "The Aristocrats," by J. G. O'Conor; "England, 1942," by Arthur Lynnford-Smith, I could go on and on. May these and other poets continue their solacing mission among us, that we may not falter along the hard road, but win through "to a bright future, full of happy toil."

New York, October 6th.

ELIZABETH VIRGINIA RAPLEE.

ARTHUR ROW, of Clifford, Hereford: "Although I do not care much for adulatory phrases to be applied to persons or periodicals who are assumably doing their duty, I should like to say how much I approve of THE POETRY REVIEW's return to the use of 'formed verse' in its recent issues. Especially would I mention "The Patriot," by Leslie Greene, in August-September number—a great poem. Leslie Greene embraces Spender's idea of the opposing armies becoming one in death or sleep, and he tells his story the more effectively by the use of metre and rhyme. May this poem prove a prelude to many others in the 'formed' manner."

MR. HAROLD NICOLSON AND TENNYSON

Recently, by a happy thought, the fiftieth anniversary of Tennyson's death was celebrated by The Poetry Society. His Majesty congratulated the Society on their commemoration "of a great poet and a great Englishman." A company of gifted men and women generously gave their time to interpret his work on the Savoy stage. None who were privileged to hear them could deny how vital still, how various, and how splendid was this poet's legacy to the British race.

Then, a month or so afterwards, comes Mr. Nicolson with an article in The Poetry Review so confused, so self-contradictory, so vague, blowing so hot and cold that it almost defies analysis—(I am obliged to comment thus on his remarks as they were almost wholly without context.) Yet, in an editorial footnote, this article is described as "authoritative." I must—most reluctantly—ask why ? A good many years ago now Mr. Nicolson wrote a book on my grandfather which I have read more than once. In this book he did a certain service perhaps in demolishing the "plaster-saint" conception of the poet, but at the same time became the victim of his proper wit and created a monstrous fiction of his own which still seems to stay unchanged in his mind. That, perhaps, is his own concern, but I think it should strictly remain so. My grandfather was never, at any time of his life, the friendless, lonely, solitary being that Mr. Nicolson imagines. In fact he had more friends than fall to the lot of most men and was never known to have a personal quarrel. These were friends from every class of life, and every profession and occupation. My own other grandfather, Frederick Locker-Lampson, the most ironical and fastidious of men, who knew all that was best in the society of the then capitals of the world, London, Paris and Rome (and incidentally a good deal of what was worst) considered Alfred Tennyson, whom he knew intimately, "the finest company in the world." So did Carlyle. And what about Mr. Nicolson's own relative, Lord Dufferin ? I have named only three. I could name scores. How, if the poet had been the gloomy, miserable, discontented, egotistical, self-seeking, money-grabbing, cowardly, jealous individual that Mr. Nicolson insinuates, could such a wealth of friendship have been possible ?

Now let us examine the equally preposterous suggestion that Tennyson, sometime and somehow (Mr. Nicolson does not particularize except by an allusion to "his middle period") deserted his own lyrical genius for modes of expression more fitted to meet the mood of the age and more likely to bring him pecuniary reward. Presumably, then, Mr. Nicolson refers to those works of that period which brought him his widest recognition, otherwise his remarks would seem quite pointless.

The first of them was "The Princess." This was published in 1847, two or three years after the only severe hypochondriacal attack (nor were the reasons for it lacking) that ever (*pace* Mr. Nicolson) brought the poet really low, and we are asked to believe that it was deliberately composed as bait for public favour. It seems to me, at least, that my grandfather would have been a wizard indeed, had he been able definitely to foresee success for a poem as completely novel—so absolutely *sui generis*. Moreover, since his illness, his pecuniary difficulties had come to an end.

The second popular success was "In Memoriam." On this Tennyson had been engaged for over seventeen years, and, as he himself says, it was written for its own sake not primarily for publication at all. Surely, apart from these considerations, had popular success been the principal object, something akin to "The Princess," as it had already succeeded, would have been the likelier to attain it, not a poem so different that it is scarcely possible to imagine the same mind conceiving both.

As for Mr. Nicolson's criticisms, at one time he says "In Memoriam" is a magnificent poem ; at another that it rises quite often above the level of mere literary

technique! Elsewhere that it would have been more magnificent still if it had been something quite different and more in keeping with what he conceives to be my grandfather's character! What does he mean? Anyone by consulting my uncle's life of the poet can read his own explanation of it, which personally I prefer to Mr. Nicolson's.

Why, too, does he applaud the moral, or message, of "Ulysses" while he condemns that of "In Memoriam"? My grandfather was under the impresssion that it was the same in both. Mr. Nicolson labels "The Idylls" "insincere" and rebukes Tennyson for "preaching"—What cant this is! Why in an age of preachers should he alone be stigmatised? What was so very much amiss with his sermon? Is there anything in his private life so vastly conflicting with his profession?

Then again we are told that he should have dived more deeply into the cleavages between science and religion. Why? He was writing poetry, not scientific or theological treatises. Besides, is it not a strange thing, on the one hand, to condemn a man for preaching, and on the other, to belittle him for not preaching more? Mr. Nicolson says he is irritated by the complacency of Tennyson's verse. I ask where is that complacency to be found? Also, how and where "the poet's moral timidity hampered his intelligence"?

Two final questions! (i) Why does Mr. Nicolson advise his young friends to read the songs in "Maud" when there are no songs in "Maud." (ii) Why should "Ulysses" (intelligently or not) be dismissed as Victorian when it was probably written in the reign of William IV? But what *is* this Victorian complex poor Mr. Nicolson suffers from? It is really very queer.

Brentwood, December 30th, 1942. A. TENNYSON.

REALISM IN VERSE

I am delighted with the graceful and amusing answer of Mr. Alan Scott to my rather hard-hitting letter. He has, by his forbearance, demonstrated that he possesses the guts and blood about which he writes so sanguinarily. I am the more delighted, since the last thing I desired was to hurt his feelings. Had that occurred I must have denied myself any rejoinder and I really do not think he has by his reply said the last word upon the subject. I have, for instance, no squeamish objection to gazing upon horrors or to reading about them. I am not a pale person addicted to pink pills. On the contrary, I am sufficiently robust in mind to have held my own in a moderately chequered career. Where I quarrel with Mr. Scott in his presentation of horrors, is that he loses power by a studied crudity of expression, which results in a weaker realisation of the essential tragedy of his theme. His idea is obviously to "come out with it" in the plainest terms, to use words as shock troops in a frontal attack instead of restrainedly and artfully and, as it were, by infiltration tactics, to reach his objective.

The moving quality of verse is not enhanced by excessive realism. "Violence is not strength and damns have had their day" as Stephen Phillips, when Editor of this periodical, reminded Mr. Masefield. It is certain that restraint in language can be infinitely more poignant than indulgence in its more lurid terms. If Mr. Scott wants to call our attention to the viler aspects of war, and I do not say he is wrong, I submit that he will have much greater success and be infinitely more significant by using reticence to excite the imagination of his readers. His passion for gory detail is really unhelpful in arousing responsive emotion. We do not want these visceral close-ups to oust our pity by a bored impatience at the banal.

Let me reply to his rueful verses in the same metre.

Too true ? No, surely not, your verse
But paints one side of war,
A lurid picture, trite, perverse,
Injecting sentiment and worse
Into an abbatoir.

We'll not dispute theology,
There are so many gods,
But if you mean that heaven be
Assured to every casualty—
Then we are much at odds.

A pretty fancy, nothing more,
Not fit for adult brains,
That every man who spills his gore,
Conscripted into Total War,
Finds God in "bloody drains."

No, mine's a much maturer God
Who weighs a man with care,
Who has no use for "retching rod"
Is unimpressed by "blazing sod"
Or even "ruptured air."

Take heart, the way a man must die
We also may ignore,
'Neath tranquil roof or shell torn sky
Let pity close his staring eye
Not babble of his gore.

With reference to your other correspondent's letter I am obliged to Miss Dobell for her courageous stab at Capt. Rook's meaning when he wrote the line "Along the banks of the pavement." Her elucidation of this mystery, if accurate, only increased my bewilderment. Why he did not write "Along the rubble heaped (or banked) pavement" instead of indulging in the obscurity of his actual words will always defy my comprehension.

Twickenham. H. W. Harding.

EMILY BRONTË MYSTERIES

An event of much importance for poets and poetry has taken place lately in the publication of the Complete Poems of Emily Brontë, unedited and uncut by sisters or mis-guided friends. Have we at last got all the missing Gondal poems and do they shed any light on the darker places of Emily's life ? Most critics are now agreed that sometime in 1838—probably between November '38 and April '39—Emily suffered a severe shock to her emotions, pride and self-esteem, if not her conscience, because after this period we get all the "guilt," "shame" and "crime" poems. Did this something in her emotional life happen at Bradford ? "The Wanderer" is dated Bradford. Miss Romer Wilson plays with the idea of Bradford, asks the question "Why Bradford ?" and leaves it at that. I suggest "Why *not* Bradford ?" Branwell Brontë had a studio there, which would be a natural place for a sister to visit, and where normally

Emily and the others would "sit" to him for their portraits. Is there any evidence that the pillar in the group of the Brontë sisters was at the Haworth Parsonage? Would not Branwell want to paint them at his studio? He may have made studies of Emily by herself when she was at Law Hill. She was not far away, and might have visited him on her free days. Keighley is quite near Bradford, a more natural town for them all to visit rather than—say Leeds or Halifax.

There are few references, it is true, to Bradford, in any of Charlotte's letters. Is it possible that Emily met at Bradford, at her brother's studio, perhaps, the "Louis Parensell" (or the man for whom this name was an alias) whose name appears on one of the Gondal poems? Did Emily meet her Dark Hero in this man or a shadowy counterpart of a dark hero? There is a significant reference to Bradford in one of the diaries later on. Emily and Anne were unhappy there on their way home from their little "jaunt" to York to see the Minster. Had Emily wretched memories of Bradford and did she want to cut it out of her life altogether? After Branwell failed as an artist, the girls would naturally not wish to visit the city again, but was that enough to make Emily dislike it so much?

I make the suggestion for what it is worth, and for Brontë students to unravel that in the ugly grey city of Bradford lies the answer to the riddle of Emily Brontë's tragic and painful love story.

Too much can never be written about the Brontës, particularly Emily, to please me. Let us have books and more books about them.

Emily has left a legacy of hundreds of poems, some indifferent, some poor, some fine, some superb. We know enough about her to know that she had a prison-complex or claustrophobia. Had she after 1838 also a guilt or crime-complex? What happened in those months to bring this about? Shall we ever know, or is the secret buried for ever with all the papers and letters Charlotte destroyed, disastrously as far as posterity is concerned, after her sister's death?

Harrogate. MARJORIE STUART BARROW.

A POETRY REVIEW DISCOVERY

It gave me great pleasure to read Trooper Helliwell's "If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem" in the November-December POETRY REVIEW. The previous number was the first to come my way, and I absorbed its every word with avidity, but not with the same satisfaction as I derived from the poem to which I refer. The verse contained in the previous issue seemed to lack that very quality—vision—without which, as the motto of The Poetry Society has it, "the people perish."

I will not disguise the fact that Mr. Helliwell is a friend with whom I have recently established contact. That his poetry should not lack vision is not surprising since it is as a painter that he excels, although his early dialect poetry first attracted my attention as early as 1934, when Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" spurred him to attempt a dramatic monologue of his own with Vincent Van Gogh as protagonist. Mr. Helliwell's sister submitted it to the *Quarterly Review*, the editor of which returned it with the comment: "Glad you like Browning—so do I. Try Pound and Hart Crane." This made me smile, for anyone less bookish than my young friend it would be hard to imagine. Yet he is essentially a "maker."

Little did I think then that it would be as poet rather than as painter that Helliwell would first come before the public eye. Much as I personally like his verse and the prose of his short stories and novel (unfinished), it is as a painter that we shall hear more of him. A series of desert drawings will shortly be exhibited by the A.I.A. at Wakefield.

East Grinstead, January 7th. A CLERK OF OXENFORD.

WHERE ARE THE WAR POETS?

The phrase "Let the People Sing" has done much to oil the wheels of war production in our factories, shipyards, mines and other centres of Britain's war effort; and, whenever they do sing—or "whistle while they work"—war dreariness is abolished. I am anxious to give yet another outlet to this gloom-dispelling impulse.

I believe there is poetry running through the hearts and the minds of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and war workers generally. I believe they are singing within themselves —Poems of the People. I want to find these, as yet, unpublished poems, and to gather the best of them under the title *Poems of the People*.

Would you be good enough to help me to find them by allowing space for this letter in your columns? After the publication of *Poems of this War*, by the Cambridge University Press, I received, unasked, hundreds of poems written by the people of England. There must be many more. When found they should show that this island people not only sang as they went to war, but still excelled in what was their greatest art in peace.

30 York House, Turk's Row, S.W.3, January 4th. COLIN STRANG.

THE PROPOSED ROYAL ACADEMY OF POETRY

Many friends of The Poetry Society would welcome and endorse H. W. Harding's penetrating analysis of the proposals you have allowed to be put forward in THE POETRY REVIEW with respect to a "Royal Academy of Poetry."

Why an "Academy?" The term postulates a teaching body by whom the aerial spirit would be cribbed, cabined and confined, with inevitable academic ossification, shackling poetry with all the chains from which we are anxious to free it. Its greatest need is what the whole world is fighting for—*perfect* freedom.

It would seem that the advocates of this mistaken "development" are newcomers to The Poetry Society, and must have little knowledge or experience of its scope and achievements. How is it that it alone has survived thirty eventful, changeful years when many other pretentious schemes have faded out as quickly as they rose?

No new body is needed to represent and promote the best interests of poetry. Whatever is desirable and feasible has been attempted or can be undertaken by The Poetry Society. Do its friends deny this? Who covet its prestige and possessions or seek to destroy it, or render it amorphous?

And why seek to change its distinct, comprehensive, proud, all-sufficient title? It is and must remain *The* Poetry Society; an inspired creation, doggedly developed and made flexible flesh.

The Poetry Society has been so long identified with the stimulation of poetic art, and has achieved such international distinction by its labours that it would be lamentable if any change should destroy its character and its influence. Under the title of The Poetry Society it has gained fame here and abroad, and it would be tragic if its triumphs were obliterated by some counterfeit concern which would perish, as all things perish, without soul and imagination.

London, S.W.12. LESLIE GREENE.

Some substantial reason might be provided for the creation of a Royal Academy of Poetry if a highly successful society for the promotion of poetry did not already exist. The Poetry Society for the past thirty years has cultivated and encouraged poetic expression in every legitimate way. By lectures, readings, meetings, reunions, examinations, and circulation of literature it has created a large and increasing membership at home and abroad, and its labours are so widespread that its fame is inter-

national. Its two regular journals give ready access to poets of promise, and any verse of distinctive merit from unknown authors is sure of publication.

A Royal Academy of Poetry might submerge The Poetry Society. If such a calamity occurred it would mean sacrificing the substance for the shadow. The greatest achievements in the arts were made when Royal Academies were still in the recesses of remote Time. Genius will never be inspired by fashionable societies. It will work out its own salvation and reach the multitude if its work has the gift of endurance.

I am sure the idea of a Royal Academy of Poetry is not acceptable to the bulk of The Poetry Society, and a plebiscite of the members would disclose overwhelmingly their objection to the imposition of a grandiose academy when such a faculty is not necessary.

London, S.W.1. A POETRY PARTISAN.

In renewing my subscription for the thirteenth year of membership, I should like to say a word regarding the proposed Royal Academy of Poetry. As one of hundreds of unpublished and languishing poets for whom the Society does its noble best, it seems to me that awards of merit do not bring us any nearer our final judge—the ordinary poetry-loving public. We do not want letters after our name, we want a chance to be read. The member who suggests that collections of verse by Poetry Society poets should be submitted and judged for yearly publication of the winning selections, has my full support, the publication of an "Augustan Series" of winning Poetry Society poets in attractive and arresting booklet style. The series could be made at least as self-supporting as *Poetry of To-day* by means of a reasonable entry fee, and would bear the authorative stamp of the Society, no new organisation then being necessary. The judging committee should be composed of established poets, who are not members ; of outsiders ; and of Poetry Society judges well under forty as well as over it. Ordinary members of the Society should be allowed to vote for the best poem in each preceding number of THE POETRY REVIEW, marks to be taken into consideration at the end of the year.

London, N.W.3. JANET URQUHART.

KALIDASA AND SHAKESPEARE

Your contributor, Mr. Ranjee G. Shahani, has done scant justice to both Shakespeare or Kalidasa, and many another poet and philosopher.

I am unaware of your contributor's equipment as a poet or philosopher, but I somehow feel he has not quite dipped deep enough in either poet to really get the "atmosphere" in which poets live. Man is fundamentally the same everywhere, and poets and philosophers are but men after all. They, therefore, cannot be expected to be sacrosanct, but they are human, whether we like it or not.

It matters not a whit whether "murder, arson, rape, lechery" were in England when Bill Shakespeare or the "Swan of Avon" wrote. *That* did not help or hinder him. It was his genius, that transcends environment, that came straight from his soul and his heart that made him the intellectual giant he was, and the sentimental lover he loved to be.

Similarly with Kalidasa. His environment (less historical than Shakespeare's) did not affect in any marked degree his genius. It was of another order than was Shakespeare's, and it is not particularly pleasing to belittle those to whom we are indebted. We don't need to fully understand a poet—we feel him. What he says is not always understandable by everybody everywhere, nor should it be so. Enough if we know that he wrote and spake to some hearts somewhere, and that he wrote and spake to us,

in some small way to help us rather over-estimate than under-estimate his love, his faith, his courage and his humility. We Europeans know Kalidasa but superficially, and it cannot be otherwise, for who can fathom the Oriental? But we know he had the Vision Glorious in his own way, such as Suridas had in that nautch-girl singing in a Rajput court:

"O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness,
By Thy touch, if Thou wilt, Thou can'st make me pure.

One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna,
Another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,
But when they fall into the Ganges,
Both alike become holy.

One piece of iron is the image in the temple,
Another is the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's stone,
Both alike turn to gold.

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness,
Make us both the same Brahman."

This is not our Vision Glorious, nor need it be so, but whoever sets down in writing an estimate of a poet, let him remember (if no offence be taken), a homely saying we have in English—"Charity begins at home." Charity is just love. Let us love our own folk first, especially our poets, and we shall have a surer foundation for loving other people and their poets than to put in plain English "sheer rubbish," and covertly make an unnecessary comparison under the guise of a clever anecdote.

Jalpaiguri, Bengal. A. Francon Williams.

FACILITY AND PRECISION

The English-speaking world has reached a dead-end in that most of our "moderns" seem to look askance at a "facility in language." Are we so unsure of ourselves that we fear we may be duped? In that respect, we resemble the sturdy illiterate who insists that his limited mode of expression is the only honest means of human communication. Nevertheless, it seems that the transmittal of the nuances of an advanced civilization call for the use of the nuances in language. All ideas cannot be represented in simple terms; many cannot be represented in their simplest terms. In fact, nothing can be portrayed exactly in words; words can only suggest a changing, fleeting, variable, relative meaning to a variable, changing, emotional humanity. Meaning, therefore, is relative and personal. "The-thing-itself" group errs in that words can never do more than a weak imitation of "the-thing." Very often connotations become either an uncontrolled explosion or a puzzle for fools. Hence, the person who calls for or speaks of the "exact" word refers to the impossible. In searching for the nearest approach to the "exact" word a "facility in language" should go deeper than the so called "simple" terms, as the very facility suggests a more complete acquaintance or familiarity with the "tools of the trade"; however, even the greatest facility must fall somewhat short of the "simplest terms" in which an extraordinary idea need be couched to be intelligible. As a homely illustration, let us presume two wood-workers with the same degree of sensitive imagery and creative instinct: if one has at his

finger tips all of the "tools of the trade" and the other only a stone adze, from which may we expect the finer wood-working designs? To have a splendid working-vocabulary is not a literary fault but rather the element of discrimination in usage may well be a major fault.

The virility of a new-born language no one will deny. It seems to come into being in a Minervaesque fashion. It has all of the power of freshness, directness of applicability, discovery, and adventure. Nevertheless, even here we see a gradation in facility. Does anyone deny the facility of Chaucer or Shakespeare? It has been said repeatedly that there can be no great poetry after a renaissance. This may be true. If so, it tends to prove that with the advance and consequent growth of complexity of a civilization, a greater facility in language becomes necessary to express its manifestations until it reaches a point where to the human mind it becomes chaotic. At that point it is probably humanly impossible to convey the multiform images and ideas of the contemporary situation by any symbolic means.

All this is a mere preamble to the writings of Ranjee G. Shahani. In this Easterner we have the rarest and richest English now appearing in THE POETRY REVIEW; and to contravert this we have the usual somewhat amusing suspicions of his powers in various letters from your correspondents. He says his say devastatingly; he tabulates his values, not microscopically, but from an overall understanding of the whole. Naturally the astigmatic fret.

"The Asiatic Element in Swinburne" may or may not prove the roots of the "Hymn of Prosperpine"; however, to me, it was a startling prose parallel of Swinburne's poetry. And, unless I am mistaken, the power of Swinburne lies in the rarest facility in English throughout the entire gamut of English poets. Those who decry Swinburne most do so, I believe, because innately they feel he wrote too easily to write well. And the probable cause of the many criticisms suggesting a wordy emptiness lies in the fact that he so charmed even the perverse reader by his fluidity, that said reader hopelessly lost grasp of his images and related thinking. Shahani has taken up the element of thought inter-woven throughout Swinburne's poetry. Many English and American readers, particularly our "moderns," would be apt to miss that as they dote on the annotated, cumbersome, jerky stuff, where one feels the inept struggler thumbing his full-size dictionary in a desperate search for the "exact" word or "the-thing-itself" to compass a complicated, intangible idea in "simple" terms. What tremendous ado to present a limping record that will need daily exposition until it decays in its own mold.

U.S.A. Army, Fort Douglas, Utah, October 21st. CULLEN JONES.

"POETRY DOESN'T SELL"

This is a well-known phenomenon. The chagrin to which it gives rise is not fully consoled by the forced withdrawal of poets to an eminence from which they try to look down upon the prosy-minded public. They don't succeed, because poets *want* to sell.

There must be something amiss in the practice of this art, for while the output is voluminous the reception is very poor. It is like a broadcast on a wave-length that common sets cannot tune to; the broadcasters very determined, very confident, yet, for the most part, inaudible.

Poets, with novelists and other writers, are our articulators, that is they express in words what we think and feel vaguely, and so reveal us to ourselves. Even fiction—thrillers, love stories, character studies are read and enjoyed because they make concrete pictures of our subconscious wishes, fears, memories. The thousand and one affections and reflections which we fail to pursue or which we deliberately suppress,

are put into articulate shape disguised as narratives about possible, or impossible, strangers, but in reality all are strange facets of ourselves. Over the whole range of intimations where "words fail us" writers entertain or instruct us. The key to their success is that in expressing themselves they unlock closets, closed, unsuspected, or deliberately barred, in the minds of their readers. In this sense writers express the selves of their readers; this is their psychological function in the age in which they live.

Poets are distinguished from the other classes of writers in that the rhythmic and lyrical form of expression imposes a definite technical discipline and so raises their art to a greater height of austerity in formulation and to a refinement of abstraction in content. But the function of poets should be still conceived in terms of the age in which they live. And this brings us to the reason why poetry fails to sell. It is because most poets are not conscious functionaries of their age.

Self-consciousness is the commonest source of poetic urge and inspiration, but pre-occupation with self is not enough. Far too many poems are written round a few intimate themes such as the author's place on Parnassus, the poet's passion for recognition, love-yearns or, more often, disappointments, the failure to attain ideals, the caprices of fate. These are the growing-pains of sensitivity, and while they provide an excellent gymnastic for the power of felicitous or of impassioned expression, they are far too often so ingenuous, so immature, so private as to arouse no response whatever in the reader. Self-consciousness is not nearly enough.

Another class of poem that is largely outmoded for our time is the simple child-sized wonder-at-nature poem about a bird upon a bough, blossoms, the multiplicity of stars, the seasonal change in the hues of foliage. These may provide practice in the elements of descriptive poesy, of lyrical extravaganza, and of *naiveté* that in prose would be commendable in fifth-form essays. But who wants to buy such? It is like offering a concert consisting of practice exercises in preparation for playing a concerto.

It is, of course, easy—and ungracious—merely to describe in uncomplimentary terms the poetry that is unmarketable. But the examination has, I hope, indicated what is wrong, not only commercially but spiritually, with the present enormous output of unread verse.

Subjective pre-occupation, the ability to know and to portray in words the subtle affections of our own individuality is only half the story—less than half. Relativity is the true condition of life, of our very existence. In every sphere of reality we are related to physical, chemical, geographical, racial, ideological factors: each of us is the focus of an infinitude of relatednesses; there is no reality in "ego" save as an "isolate," the necessary unit of awareness. That is why ego-centricity is so necessary an experience in the development of a poet, but also why it is so fatal a "stopping place." All the relationship values are wrong—as indicated by the wise ill-repute of self-interest, selfishness, etc. Yet many—far too many—poets "settle down" at this stage in their artistic growth and offer for public exhibition, entertainment and SALE the intimacies of their self-communings, private heart-flutterings, their self-interests . . . matters that they would not bore their friends with, manners of expression that sincerely flatter the easier classics, in fact verses that have that weak sincerity that owes most to a lack of dynamic imagination.

Poetry will be rehabilitated in public esteem when it performs a public service by making articulate the many unexpressed yearnings, half-felt hopes, dawning discoveries in the contemporary ferment of spirit. And it is to the poets that the task is allotted; it is their function to reflect upon and reflect the pre-occupations in depth of this immediate age. A true interpretation of the changing attachments, confidences, confusions and solvents will of course reveal universal truths, but these must be

re-envisaged in and for our times and in our idiom. And poets must fill this function for us, by focussing their affections upon our relativities; turn their attention outward-bound to the multi-sensed scene of strains, quests, securities that make up our present pattern of thought and feeling, illumine the dark puzzles, interpret the emerging shapes of individual and collective forms of harmony and beauty. When poets become in this sense "functionaries" of society, their poems will fill a deeply-felt want, and will sell!

Director of The Favil Press, 152 Kensington Church St., W.8. A. E. Lowy.

NO ONE CAN GO THE WAY I GO

This poem appeared in The Poetry Review, November-December number, page 339, as by Lieut. Rose, of H.M.S. *Cossack:* it is by me. The manuscript was sent to you in error by his aunt, she thinking it was by William Rose because she found it among his papers. This was probably due to the fact that he and I were ardent correspondents about poetry and sent each other some of our poems as they were written. He liked this poem particularly, and probably copied it out and learned it by heart. The poem was published in the magazine *Kingdom Come,* Vol. II, No. 4, Summer, 1941, page 106, under my own name.

My esteem and affection for William Rose is indicated by the Elegy I wrote for him, "Instead of Tears," published in The Poetry Review, August, 1942, page 205, and I know him well enough to be sure he would prefer that my poem is recognised as being mine and not his.

Norbury Park, January 6th. Marie C. Stopes.

The Golden Cockerel Press has just issued a volume entitled *Lucretia Borgia,* which ought to be of great interest to lovers or students of Swinburne and also to those who are attracted by the Renaissance period and particularly by the strange family of the Borgias. This volume contains, in some forty large pages, a hitherto unpublished fragment of an ambitious prose work by Swinburne on the subject of that family, and especially of the leading female member of the house; and, in the form of an extensive commentary and series of notes by Mr. Randolph Hughes, what is really a new book on the poet and a contribution to the history of the period in question. Mr. Hughes brings forward a good deal of new information concerning Swinburne, and suggests a number of new estimates of his work on various sides. On the whole, he does a lot to demolish the belittling and silly legend of which the poet is still the victim.

Swinburne's evaluation of Lucretia and Caesar Borgia is not that of the standard histories of to-day. If the latter are right, says Mr. Hughes, "then Swinburne's estimate is pitiably wrong; it is that of a poor fool who was the eager victim of a wild illusion that corresponded with no sort of reality; and one of the largest of his poetic ambitions, extending over a lifetime, was directed towards a sorry chimera unworthy of the attention of a self-respecting man." Mr. Hughes has thus been led "to reopen he question of the Borgias, examine assessments, and re-present the more distinguished members of that house." As a result of this investigation, Swinburne, particularly in the case of Lucretia, stands out as being much more right than Gregorovius, J. A. Symonds, Mandell Creighton and other modern authorities. Similarly, in order to explain Swinburne's attachment to the Renaissance as a whole, Mr. Hughes has found it necessary to pass that period in review from certain new angles; and this leads to a presentation of it which is not that of the ordinary text-books. Incidentally, much in this section of the book is noteworthy in the light of world events of to-day—and Mr. Hughes does not refrain from drawing parallels or establishing lines of filiation when the context allows of this.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

A great number and variety of contributions were sent this time, some good, some bad, some that we might, for want of a better word, call "pilgrim." On reading many of these one is tempted to the conclusion that most people write too much, but such a conclusion would be ill-considered, for one must remember the long novitiate that must be served to poetry, the long pilgrimage that must be taken to reach her holy place: any one of these poems, then, may be part of some faithful pilgrim's progress.

Perhaps the most prevalent defect one notes in reading through the entries is a lack of clear thinking. Apart from the usual crop of mixed metaphors and grammatical lapses there is definite failure to keep to the point, to draw a logical conclusion; in some cases it is very difficult to discover a point at all, or why the poem was written. It is a common misconception that logic has nothing to do with poetry; logic has everything to do with poetry; life is based on logic, and poetry, to be effective, must be based on life. No life, no art, no mind, can reach its highest pitch, its fullest fruition, without order and discipline: "woolliness" in thinking must be deprecated wherever it occurs; the artist, whatever his art, must realise the need for hard work as well as inspiration. Even emotion is logical, as the psychologists can show, and has its root somewhere, somehow, in reason. The modern tendency to obscurity, beginning perhaps with Browning, has increased the tendency of the would-be poet to careless thinking and mental laziness, but let him remember that obscurity so attained is an obscurity of poverty, not of wealth—the obscurity of the schoolgirl too ignorant to express herself clearly, not the obscurity of the scholar who assumes in his audience a greater understanding and erudition than that audience may, in fact, possess. It is not, however, obscurity that one finds in the average poem so much as sheer inability to keep to the point—a failing all too common in life as in literature, and a failing that lack of years or lack of culture cannot excuse.

One reads, from time to time, attempts to prove that Shakespeare did not write his own plays and poems, basing the proofs on arguments that amount to saying he was too ordinary, too normal, not sufficiently cultured. One longs to point out to such writers that *if* a man is sufficiently normal, that is to say if he has good health, is in possession of all his faculties, moves in the world instead of standing apart as dilettante commentator, does not carry experience to excess and so degrade himself in mind, body, or spirit, has plenty of sound common sense and a balanced mind—the power to see life whole, not merely in little patches that pertain to self, *and if*, in addition to all this, he has boundless imagination and the power to command words, then he can be—Shakespeare.

The truly great mind can transcend education and culture, but it never disregards the need for humanity; and so we come to another group of "rejecteds," those that, though striving after form and beauty of expression, are deficient in the important thing without which all art is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The writers of these we direct to St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 13.

The consideration of all these points has influenced our choice for the award, and, while there is nothing completely outstanding among this collection, we consider that JOYCE ROWE, for her moving poem, "Dieppe," and PHOEBE RAYNER, for her colourful "One Day," thoroughly deserve to be selected as winners of the award.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

H. W. Harding	Margaret Ormiston	W. T. Shorthose
Jill Higgs	Mary Savidge	H. W. Wilson

COMMENDED

Vere Arnot	Christine L. Henderson	Francis Pritchard

Pauline Emeric	Alexander Howard	Roberta Shuttleworth
K. E. Fuller	F. Jennings	Bertha M. Skeat
Dulcie Eden Greville	Morwyth Lees	Mairi Stewart
I. Sutherland Groom	Irene H. Lewis	C. Woodhouse
E. M. H. Harington	G. S. Oddy	

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by February 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent). It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author. (Entries received after the formal closing date are carried forward to the next adjudication).

£25 FOR A NEW POEM

The Poetry Society is empowered by the Executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £25 as "The Shirley Carter Leigh Greenwood" Prize for Poetry. Poems entered for this competition, which is open to all, should be addressed to "The Editor, The Poetry Review (Greenwood Premium), 33 Portman Square, W.1." No conditions with regard to subject or length are imposed. The successful poem will be published in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Owing to the late issue of THE POETRY REVIEW containing the first announcement of this important competition, the closing date has been extended to May 1st. The eminent critic, Mr. Herbert Palmer, will act as adjudicator. No previously published poem may be entered. If a *nom-de-plume* is adopted, full name and address must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym.

It is suggested that the relationship between Great Britain and the United States might inspire competitors. The late Mrs. Greenwood was an American by birth, born towards the end of the Civil War, in Richmond, Va., where her father, Mr. Chapman Leigh, was Secretary to General Robert E. Lee, a relation of her mother, and she eventually married an Englishman. Mr. S. C. L. Greenwood, her son, died some years ago at a comparatively early age.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

A record of the ideals that actuated the inception and early stages in the development of any movement being not only interesting to future generations of its members, but also of lasting documentary value, I am collecting material for a brief account of the formation of The Poetry Society and of its growth during the years 1909, 1910 and 1911. I shall be grateful therefore to any member who can kindly furnish me with reminiscences or lend me any printed matter, however slight or seemingly trivial, relating to the above period, and would particularly appreciate a copy of the first issue of the Society's *Gazette*.

14 Eldon Grove, N.W.3. EMILY VAUGHAN JENKINS.

PTE. E. MOY, 2nd Field Hospital, wishes every success to The Poetry Society and the endeavours to make THE POETRY REVIEW *a literary "therapeutic" of international eminence.*

THE POETRY REVIEW reaches me regularly I am glad to say. After I have read it from cover to cover it is devoured with interest by other officers out here.

West African Force. LT. DEREK B. READE.